A COURSE of LECTURES ON THE THEORY of LANGUAGE, AND UNIVERSAL GRAMMAR.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

LEST the following performance ſhould, by any accident, fall into other hands than thoſe for whoſe uſe it is peculiarly calculated; it is neceſſary to advertiſe in this place, that it is only intended to furniſh the lecturer with a convenient method for diſcuſſing the ſeveral ſubjects of it in a more diffuſe and familiar manner, and by no means to be a full and compleat ſet of lectures, that need no further enlargement.

INTRODUCTION.

LANGUAGE, whether ſpoken or written, is properly termed an *Art*; the rules of it being calculated to direct our practice: and it is, without all diſpute, an art of unſpeakable importance to mankind; as beings who, from the commencement to the cloſe of this mortal life, can hardly ſubſiſt but as members of ſome particular community, and are, moreover, capable of the moſt extenſive ſocial connections.

GRAMMARS are books that contain the rules and precepts of this art: and, notwithſtanding the art of ſpeech is always

learned at firſt, and that of ſpeaking any particular language may be learned at any time of life, as all other arts may be learned, by *imitation* only, without precept; the rules of Grammar, when perſons are capable of uſing them, do very much facilitate the acquiring this art, and are of great uſe in order to make a perſon more exactly and extenſively acquainted with a language that was learned at firſt without their aſſiſtance. Thus the Grammars of the *Hebrew*, *Greek*, *Latin*, *Engliſh* and other tongues contain all the rules and precepts neceſſary to make a perſon underſtand the ſtructure of thoſe languages; in order to enable him, either to uſe them with accuracy himſelf, or underſtand another perſon who uſes them.

All *Art* is founded on *Science*, or the knowledge of the materials employed in them and their fitneſs for the uſes to which they

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are applied. And though many arts were found out by accident, without any previous knowledge of thoſe parts of nature on which they depend, it is uſeful to trace arts to their natural principles, and to be able to comprehend the reaſon of the beneficial effects they have in practice: for this knowledge leads to the means of perfecting and extending the arts.

Thus *Medicine* is the art of curing diſeaſes, and though the methods of cure, in moſt particular caſes, might be found out by chance, and many tollerably ſucceſsful practitioners never trouble themſelves about the theory of Phyſic, yet cures certainly depend upon the nature of the human body and of the medicines applied to it: ſince their mutual action, with the beneficial conſequences of it, muſt have been agreeable to the uſual courſe of nature: and it is wor-

thy the attention of the profeſſors of that art to conſider it as a ſcience, to trace out the natural cauſes of the diſorders of the human body, to underſtand the properties of the ſeveral articles of the *materia medica* they make uſe of, and conſider their mutual influences; ſince, knowing the ſubject they act upon, and thoſe they act with, they may be better able to predict and procure any deſired event.

In like manner is the *art of language* founded upon ſcience; and it is a matter both of curioſity and uſefulneſs to enquire into the natural powers of thoſe ſounds and characters which are the inſtruments of it, to conſider the modifications they are capable of, and their fitneſs to anſwer the purpoſes of a language proper for the mutual communication of ſuch beings as we are.

This

This *theory* or *rationale* of language is the ſubject of the following courſe of lectures. In them it is propoſed to point out the ſeveral powers and modes of expreſſion that ſounds and characters are capable of, to trace their connexion with, or relation to the ideas they repreſent; and to ſhew the actual variety of the external expreſſions of the ſame mental conceptions which different languages exhibit. This compariſon will enable us to judge which is the moſt adaquate and convenient method of expreſſion, will diſcover what is defective, and what is redundant in the ſtructure of any particular language, and direct to the moſt proper method of ſupplying the defect, or leſſening the inconveniences ariſing from the ſuperfluity; and, laſtly, it is only from a perfect knowledge of the theory of language in general that we can form any rational expectations of what ſome ingenious perſons in the republick

lick of letters have conjectured may be one of the laſt and greateſt atchievements of human genius, viz. a *philoſophical* and *univerſal language*, which ſhall be the moſt natural and perfect expreſſion of human ideas and ſentiments, and much better adapted than any language now in uſe, to anſwer all the purpoſes of human life and ſcience.

Beſides, what can have a juſter claim to our attention as a matter of *curioſity*, than an enquiry into the foundation of that art which is the means of preſerving and bringing to perfection all other arts; an enquiry into the extent and application of a faculty which is, to a great degree, the meaſure of our intellectual powers; which, therefore, conſtitutes what is the moſt obvious, and at the ſame time a real diſtinction between the rational and merely animal nature; which, according

according to the different degrees of perfection in which it is poſſeſſed, diſtinguiſhes nations that are improved from thoſe that are barbarous; and which, in the ſame country, renders one man ſuperior to another.

The *examples* and *illuſtrations* which there was occaſion to introduce into the following lectures, more than our own tongue could furniſh, are deſignedly brought from thoſe languages chiefly which a liberal education among ourſelves brings us acquainted with, as *Latin, Greek, Hebrew,* and *French:* the principles of which it is, therefore, of more particular conſequence to the *Britiſh Youth* perfectly to underſtand. This deſign however hath not been ſo rigorouſly adhered to, as to exclude an account of what is curious and ſingular in the ſtructure of other languages.

LECTURE

LECTURE the FIRST.

OF

ARTICULATION.

THE kind author of nature hath given to every animal that is capable of any kind of ſociety, a power of communicating his ſenſations and apprehenſions, at leaſt, to every other animal he is connected with: and this power is more or leſs extenſive in proportion as the animal is fitted for a more perfect or imperfect ſtate of ſociety.

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An animal that hath little connection with, or dependance upon any others, either of his own or a different ſpecies, as he hath little to communicate, hath a power of communication proportionably ſmall: but when the connections of any animal are more numerous, and the diſpoſitions and actions of others are of more conſequence to him, it is requiſite that, for his own advantage, he be furniſhed with a greater power of affecting them, by communicating his own ideas, apprehenſions, and inclinations to them.

The *inſtrument* and *medium* of this communication are different, according to the different ſituations of animals: in ſome it being moſt convenient to apply to one ſenſe, and in others to another. E. G. *Fiſhes*, which, it is ſuppoſed, have no organs of hearing, probably give all the information

information they can give to one another by motion, perceived by the ſight or feeling: but the *air*, by means of its elaſticity (whereby it is capable of tranſmitting every poſſible variety of vibration) affords to all animals that live in it a moſt convenient medium of communication by *ſounds*, which are perceived by the ear.

The nature of theſe communications is ſuch as is beſt ſuited to the character and occaſions of each animal reſpectively. The ſtrong and ravenous animals are furniſhed with a tone of voice that inſpires terrour and conſternation into thoſe to whom it is directed; whereas the ſhrieking and wailing note of the more timorous and defenceleſs creatures tends to inſpire pity and compaſſion; and animals of a middle nature, that are capable both of annoying others, and being annoyed themſelves, have their organs formed to emit ſounds adapted to each condition.

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The power of communication being, exactly proportioned to our ſocial connections, muſt be nearly of the ſame extent with the furniture of the mind. And as the mental powers are intimately connected with the corporeal, an endeavour to expreſs an alteration in the one will produce a correſpondent alteration in the other: ſo that from the voices and geſtures of brute animals, others (and particularly thoſe of the ſame ſpecies, which have the ſame feelings, and the ſame power of expreſſion with themſelves,) may underſtand the whole of what they mean to convey: and even men, who have given ſufficient attention to them, may be able to decypher their meaning to a conſiderable degree. Joy, ſorrow, ſurprize, with the various ſubdiviſions of thoſe paſſions, hope, fear, love, anger, jealouſy, and the like, as they have a ſtrong feeling of, they have ſtrong expreſſions for: and it is probable

that their other intellectual operations are very imperfect, as they are able to give but very obscure indications of them: though dogs, horses, elephants, and some few others give very strong proofs of thinking and sagacity by their actions.

Brute animals, though capable of emitting a considerable variety of sounds, have very little power of modulating their voices; which is called ARTICULATION. Of this men are capable. It consists not only in varying the aperture of the mouth, and thereby straitening or opening the passage of the sound, or in giving a greater or less degree of force to it; but, chiefly, in checking and stopping it in a great variety of ways, by the action of the tongue, lips, palate, and teeth. The difference in the aperture of the mouth makes the different *vowels*, and the different manner in which the sound

may

may be ſtopped and emitted again makes the different *conſonants* of ſpeech. Both vowels and conſonants, when a method was found out of expreſſing them in writing, were called *letters*, and a collection of all the letters belonging to any language is called the *Alphabet* of that language, from *alpha* and *beta* being the firſt letters of the *Greeks*.

As the pronunciation of very few of the conſonants doth intirely ſtop the paſſage of the ſound, and as the emiſſion of the air in ever ſo ſmall a quantity, either at the mouth or noſtrils, is ſufficient for the propagation of ſome ſound; moſt of the conſonants yield a ſound as well as the vowels. Thoſe articulations have obtained the name of vowels, which occaſion the moſt manifeſt aperture of the mouth, give the freeſt paſſage to the air, and are, conſequently, attended with the moſt audible ſound.

It is obſervable that dogs and other animals, not having the power of articulation, make uſe of various *geſtures*, and motions to expreſs their meaning. With men too geſtures and poſtures of the body, and particularly motions of the hands, and of the features of the countenance, are ſtrongly aſſociated with particular ſtates of mind; and being in a leſs degree voluntary, are often a ſurer indication of a man's real internal feelings than words, which are more at his command. Theſe geſtures, being equally ſignificant with words, we often have recourſe to them to expreſs a paſſion, or a ſimple intention, with more force.

When nature hath denied the power of ſpeech to a number of individuals we, nevertheleſs, often ſee them capable of holding ſomething like a converſation in *dumb-ſhow*, and people whoſe language is

ſcanty

ſcanty are obliged to help out their meaning very much by geſtures. This travellers obſerve to be the caſe with barbarous nations.

The articulations of the human voice are either *ſimple* or *complex*. The ſimple articulations are few, but the combinations of articulations in complex ſounds are almoſt infinite; ſo as not only to ſupply different terms for every thing we can expreſs, but to furniſh different nations with intirely different ſets of terms, and thereby conſtitute all the different languages which are ſpoken on the face of the earth: many of which have not only no one and the ſame word to expreſs the ſame thing, but hardly ſo much as one common ſound, though to expreſs different things.

So extenſive is the power of articulation, that ſingle letters are ſeldom made uſe of to

expreſs any thing: they are, therefore, generally ſaid to have no ſignification of themſelves. *Words*, therefore, or combinations of letters are the firſt elements of ſignificant ſpeech: thus in the word *hand*, none of the letters *h*, *a*, *n*, or *d*, have any ſignification of themſelves, but the word *hand* hath a determinate meaning annexed to it.

The ſame ſet of ſounds, or alphabet of letters, is not in uſe in all nations; becauſe mankind happened to fall early into a different application of the organs of ſpeech, and thoſe who were deſcended of any particular family or nation, or educated among them, would learn the ſounds that were in uſe in that family or nation by imitation: and as a number, much ſhort of all the modulations that the human voice is capable of, is ſufficient for all the occaſions of

of human life, there is room for very great diverſity in the articulation of different nations. (a)

Thoſe articulations are preferred which occaſion the leaſt difficulty to the ſpeaker, and give the leaſt pain to the hearer. Very ancient languages (as the *Hebrew*, *Arabick*, *Welch*, and even the *Greek*) do generally abound with harſh articulations; which, however, are uſually loſt when the languages ceaſe to be ſpoken; the languages that are formed out of their ruins retaining only the more eaſy and agreeable part of them. And when thoſe languages, for the purpoſes

(a) The *Braſilean* tongue hath not the letters *f. l. ſ.* and *z.* never joins a mute to a liquid, as *cra, pra;* and never uſes two conſonants together in the ſame word, except *mb, nd, ng.*

The *Hurons*, a North American nation, never cloſe their lips when they ſpeak; having no *labials* as *b, v, m, p* in their language.

purpoſes of literature, are at any time revived, it generally happens that the pronunciation of them is made to conform to the more convenient articulation of thoſe who learn them; and ſince the languages are no longer uſed in converſation, and conſequently a very accurate diſtinction of the ſound is not neceſſary to diſtinguiſh the ſenſe, the revival of harſh antiquated ſounds ſeems to be an uſeleſs and aukward practice. There is, however, this inconvenience in departing from the native pronunciation of any language, that the native harmony of it is thereby loſt.

LECTURE the SECOND.

Of the ORIGIN of

LETTERS.

AMAZING as is the power and advantage of *ſpeech* for the communication of ideas, it is, in ſeveral reſpects, infinitely inferior to the art of *Writing*. Since by the one the power of communication is confined both in point of time and place, and in the other it is abſolutely unconfined with reſpect to both. By words we can

can converſe only with thoſe who are preſent with us, but by means of writing we become acquainted with the ſentiments and tranſactions of men in all ages, and all nations of the world. It connects, as it were, the living, the dead, and the unborn: for, by writing, the preſent age can not only receive information from the greateſt and the wiſeſt of mankind before them, but are themſelves able to convey wiſdom and inſtruction to the lateſt poſterity.

But, notwithſtanding the ſuperiority of writing to ſpeaking in the abovementioned reſpects, it is but a ſubſtiute for the art of ſpeaking; and, where both can be uſed, vaſtly inferior to it. Not to mention the eaſe and readineſs of vocal expreſſion, letters can only expreſs the ſimple ſounds of words, without the particular tone and inflection of the voice with which they are ſpoken;

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on which, notwithſtanding, [redacted] moſt important part of the meaning depends: for, in converſation, we attend as much to the manner in which a thing is ſaid, as to the words themſelves. By the tone of the voice we can vary, and modify our ideas in a manner that no power of letters can ever equal. In *Irony* the meaning of words is quite reverſed. In mentioning a perſon's name, or only the word *Sir*, we either ſimply call to him, or, in the ſtrongeſt manner in the world, without any additional words, expreſs our tenderneſs, reſpect, anger, contempt, reproach, and almoſt every other paſſion, and degree of paſſion, that the human mind is capable of.

The tranſition from ſpeaking to writing is ſo far from being thought eaſy and natural by many perſons, that ſome of the greateſt men this nation ever produced, particularly

[redacted] Dr. *Hartley*, have had recourſe to ſupernatural interpoſition to account for it, and ſuppoſe that the firſt alphabetical writings were the two tables of ſtone, which were written by the finger of God himſelf. And it muſt be acknowledged, that the oldeſt accounts we have concerning the uſe of letters in *Aſia* and *Greece* is ſo circumſtanced, as by no means to claſh with their hypotheſis. It ſeems likewiſe very probable, from *Robertſon*'s compariſon of Alphabets, that all the known ones might originally have been derived from the *Hebrew*, or *Samaritan*. They, moreover, alledge, that, to expreſs all the variety of articulations of which the human voice is capable, by ſo few ſimple characters, would, have appeared ſo difficult a problem to the firſt rude ages of mankind, that, had it ever been propoſed to them, they could never have thought of attempting the ſolution of it.

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But theſe gentlemen do not ſeem to have conſidered, that though thoſe rude forefathers of the human race might have been incapable of decyphering, and reducing into an Alphabet, all the articulations of the human voice, in its preſent extent; yet, nevertheleſs, partly by chance (which hath been the mother of moſt of our uſeful inventions) and partly by attention to the ſubject, they might have hit upon a method of making a ſort of alphabet for the comparatively few and ſimple articulations that themſelves made uſe of; which might grow in perfection with the language it repreſented.

It muſt likewiſe be conſidered that the pronunciation of thoſe rude ages, being uſed chiefly to expreſs very ſtrong apprehenſions, muſt have been peculiarly loud, and diſtinct: beſides, like children when they firſt learn a language, or men who are not per-

fectly maſters of a new one, they would be obliged to ſpeak very ſlow, both to favour the ſlowneſs of their own inventions, and recollections, and alſo to make themſelves underſtood by others who were not more perfect in the uſe of language than themſelves. Theſe circumſtances would afford them a much fairer opportunity of obſerving the different poſition of the organs, and diſtinguiſhing the ſeveral articulations of ſpeech than the preſent method of pronunciation affords us.

Some poſitions of the organs attending articulation, one would think, they might ſoon diſtinguiſh; being viſible to the eye, as well as perceived in their effects by the ear, and felt in their own pronunciation: for inſtance, the ſhutting and different aperture of the lips, likewiſe the hiſſing ſound of [s], that of [r], and ſeveral others which,

which are very diſtinguiſhable, it is probable might have been taken notice of very early, and have had characters appropriated to them before the reſt. And the greater opening of the mouth, attending the primitive violent pronunciation, would render the action of all the organs, in the whole buſineſs of articulation, more viſible than our way of ſpeaking admits of.

Granting that men might, for ſome time, diſtinguiſh no more than four or ſix letters, or, one for each of the claſſes into which we divide them at preſent; as *labials*, *dentals*, *linguals*, *palatines*, *gutturals* and the like, they might afterwards obſerve a difference in the articulations they had at firſt referred to one letter, and make a proportionable variation of their character. In this gradual manner might their characters multiply, till at length they were ſufficient to com-

poſe an ancient alphabet. Some articulations ſeem to be ſufficiently diſtinguiſhable to have given a hint for a beginning, and a beginning once made, the progreſs ſeems not to have been very difficult. And even an imperfect apprehenſion of the uſe and advantage of ſuch an invention would quicken their endeavours to perfect it.

It ſeems to favour theſe obſervations, that the *Eaſtern*, which are the oldeſt, alphabets have no vowels, the poſitions of the organs of ſpeech to expreſs the conſonants being very diſtinguiſhably different, it is natural to ſuppoſe they would invent characters for them firſt. Whereas the vowels, being produced by little more than different degrees of the aperture of the mouth, they might not think of diſtinguiſhing them by characters, till their alphabet was formed; when, on account of their making uſe of it for the notation

notation of numbers, and other ſimilar purpoſes, it might have been inconvenient to alter the form of it, ſo much as they muſt have done to incorporate the vowels into it. They therefore at firſt diſtinguiſhed the vowels by general cuſtom, or general rules; and afterwards by other methods, which did not interfere with the conſonants.

To theſe let me add another obſervation, which is, that the imperfection of all alphabets, the *Hebrew* by no means excepted, ſeems to argue them not to have been the product of divine ſkill, but the reſult of ſuch a concurrence of accident and gradual improvement as all human arts, and what we call inventions, owe their birth to. For, certainly, the alphabets in uſe bear no marks of the regularity and perfection of the works of nature: the more we conſider the latter, the more reaſon we ſee to admire their beau-

ty, juſt proportions, and conſequent fitneſs to anſwer their reſpective ends; whereas, the more we examine the former, the more defects, ſuperfluities, and imperfections of all kinds we diſcover in them. Beſides, had there ever been a divine alphabet, it would certainly have eſtabliſhed itſelf in the world by its manifeſt excellence, particularly as, upon this ſuppoſition, mankind were incapable of diviſing one themſelves.

LECTURE the THIRD.

OF

HIEROGLYPHICKS,

CHINESE CHARACTERS,

AND

DIFFERENT ALPHABETS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the probability of *Alphabetical writing* having been nothing more than a human invention, it ſeems to be too perfect a method of fixing and conveying our ideas to have been the

the firſt that mankind would hit upon. Indeed, both natural probability and hiſtory ſhow that *picture-writing*, with the contraction of it into *Hieroglyphics*, and the ſtill further refinement of it into a character like the *Chineſe*, was prior to it. I ſhall briefly illuſtrate this method in all its gradations.

To give a diſtinct idea of the ſubject, let it be obſerved, that, whereas *Alphabetical* writing is the repreſentation of *words* as *ſounds*, and can therefore be underſtood only by perſons who uſe the ſame language, the characters we are now conſidering are the repreſentations or pictures of *things* themſelves, without regard to the intervention of any ſounds whatever, and are therefore equally intelligible to perſons uſing any language.

To expreſs a tree, or animal, they who firſt

firſt uſed this method would probably begin in the moſt ſimple manner, by drawing an actual ſketch or outline of the tree or animal, and proceed in like manner to depict all other viſible objects. To repreſent ſounds, they might draw the viſible circumſtances attending the production of it, which thoſe who have any notion of painting will eaſily conceive; and for ideas of things ſtill more remote from ſight, they might have recourſe to *analogies*, or *metaphors* drawn from ſenſible things; thus *eternity* was depicted by a *ſerpent biting its tail; impoſſibility*, by *two feet ſtanding upon water*, &c.

By degrees they would learn to contract theſe pictures, and only to draw ſo much of their firſt outline as was ſufficient to diſtinguiſh one expreſſion from another. Thus *two ſwords*, and then *two croſs-ſtrokes* would ſerve to expreſs a *battle;* which was

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at firſt repreſented by the figures of men in a fighting poſture; and to denote impoſſibility, a plain horizontal line might ſuffice for the water, and two upright ſtrokes for feet, &c. In a medium between *picture-writing* and the laſt contractions of them we ſhould probably find the *Hieroglyphical* writing of the ancient *Egyptians*, and the laſt contraction of this picture or analogical writing (intermixed with a great number of arbitrary characters, to repreſent ideas and not words) may conſtitute the writing of the *Chineſe*; which is ſaid to be underſtood by ſeveral nations inhabiting the eaſtern parts of *Aſia*, though they ſpeak different languages.

The laſt improvement of ſuch a method as this may be illuſtrated by the characters that we ourſelves uſe to denote numbers. 1. 2. 3. &c. and the character &. Theſe are arbitrary marks, to denote ideas directly, without

without the intervention of words, and are alike known to all the nations of *Europe*. Imagine now that not only the ideas of numbers, and the particle *and* but all our other ideas and particles were denoted in the ſame manner, by arbitrary characters, which any nation might uſe, at the ſame time that they gave them what names they pleaſed, and we ſhould have the ideas of juſt ſuch a written language as the *Chineſe* is ſaid to be.

A few arbitrary characters, to repreſent ideas directly, as the *nine digits* &c. we find to be extremely uſeful, and preferable to any other method of expreſſing the ſame things; but it is eaſy to ſee, that this method, extended to all our ideas, would increaſe our written characters to a moſt enormous and unmanagable quantity: and we are told that it is, in fact, the buſineſs of half the life of a *Chineſe* philoſopher to learn

learn barely to read a ſufficient variety of books in their language: and the difficulty of inventing, and eſtabliſhing the uſe of new characters (without which they could have no way of expreſſing new ideas) muſt itſelf prevent the growth of arts and ſciences in that nation. This being conſidered, we need not wonder that, contrary to what hath happened in other nations, arts and ſciences ſhould have been ſo early invented by thoſe people, and yet have been at a ſtand for upwards of a thouſand years: and till they remove this impediment, and introduce *alphabetical writing*, it is no difficult matter to foreſee, that they never can make much greater progreſs than they have already made in the ſciences, and that all the improvements they will henceforward receive they muſt derive from *European* philoſophers, and *European* languages.

The

The moſt ancient *Alphabets* that we are acquainted with are certainly thoſe which are adapted to the *Eaſtern* tongues: and indeed, from the *Eaſt*, both letters, and the firſt ſeeds of all the ſciences were brought into Europe. The derivation of the *Greek alphabet* from the *Hebrew*, *Samaritan*, or *Syriac* (which it is probable, were all of them, originally, the ſame with the *Phenician*) is very evident; and the letters do very much reſemble them in ſhape, conſidering the changes that, either chance, or deſign, would neceſſarily, in a courſe of time, bring into a thing of ſuch a nature.

But what is a much ſtronger proof is hiſtorical evidences, which with one voice attribute the introduction of letters into *Greece*, to the *Pelaſgi* in the firſt place, who alſo afterwards carried them into *Italy*, and then to one *Cadmus*, who brought them

from *Phenicia*, Beſides the very order of the letters in the *Greek* alphabet, demonſtrates the ſame thing, by its correſpondence with that of the *Hebrew*, excepting thoſe chaſms which were made by the *Greeks* not adopting ſuch *Hebrew* letters as they had no ſounds anſwering to; which chaſms were in part filled up by others, ſome of which *Palamedes* about the ſiege of *Troy*, and the reſt *Simonides*, ſome time after, are ſaid to have invented.

The ancient *Latin* Alphabet was nearly the ſame with the *Greek*, before the laſt additions were made to it, retaining the F of the *Æolians* (when the reſt of *Greece* had rejected it) and the uſe which the *Pelaſgi* and ancient *Greeks* made of the H, which was an aſpirate.

Moreover, the *Greeks* univerſally (after the

the *Bœotians*, who first borrowed the practice) denoted all their *numbers* by the very same letters which the *Hebrews* made use of to denote them. And, to make their Alphabet tally with the *Hebrew* for this purpose, they filled up all the remaining chasms in their old Alphabet with real *Hebrew* letters; of which they made no other use than as *numerals*; calling them, by way of distinction

It is, further, probable that the ancient *Greeks*, in imitation of the *Phenicians*, wrote from the right hand to the left; that afterwards they wrote alternately from the right to the left, and from the left to the right, always beginning the next line where they ended the preceding; which way of writing they called , from the resemblance it bore to the manner of driving oxen in plowing, (some specimens

of which yet remain) before it was fixed in the method in which, at length, they, and after them, all the nations of *Europe* have uſed it; viz. from the left hand to the right, without variation. All the *Eaſtern* nations, whoſe language is alphabetical, except the *Armenians*, write from the right hand to the left; though the *Chineſe*, *Japaneſe*, and others, whoſe language is not alphabetical, write in neither of the abovementioned directions.

Though the alphabets at preſent in uſe among the *Arabians*, *Perſians*, and *Æthiopians*, have no great analogy to the *Hebrew* or *Syriac*, either in the number or order of the letters, (and the *Æthiopic* language, contrary to them all, is written, like *European* languages, from the left hand to the right) the moſt ancient alphabets

alphabets of all thoſe people differ very little from it; in ſo much that there is ſufficient reaſon to believe, they had all one origin.(*a*) The ſubſequent alterations were eaſy to make, when the method of writing alphabetically was once invented, as we ſee a variety of *ſhort-hands* are daily contrived by ourſelves. (*b*)

(*a*) Sir *Iſaac Newton* ſuppoſes that the *Edomites* were very early acquainted with letters, as well as Navigation, Aſtronomy, and other arts and ſciences; and that from them *Moſes* learned to write the law in a book.

(*b*) The *Gothic* characters invented by *Ulfilas* about the year of our lord 370, were in uſe in moſt parts of *Europe* after the deſtruction of the Weſtern Empire. The *French* firſt admitted the *Latin* character. The *Spaniards* by decree of a ſynod at *Lyons* aboliſhed the uſe of the *Gothic* character A. D. 1091.

The notation of ſounds differs remarkably in the manner in which *vowels* are expreſſed in different languages. No *Eaſtern* language had originally any characters for vowels, and their alphabets to this day conſiſt only of conſonants. Afterwards, to fix the pronunciation, which oral inſtruction muſt have determined before, little marks were invented, and placed either above or below the letters, to ſupply the place of vowels. The *Ethiopians*, inſtead of making vowel points diſtinct from the conſonants, affix a kind of *dot* to a particular part of the letter to expreſs the vowel accompanying it. But as theſe dots are affixed according to certain rules, and alter not the ſound of the conſonant to which they are annexed, though they make a ſmall alteration in the character, they ought not to be conſidered as adding to the number of the letters of their alphabet. This however

ever ſome have admitted, and by this means have increaſed the *Ethiopic* alphabet from 26, to 202 letters.

All *European* nations make diſtinct characters for vowels, and, from the analogy between the ancient *Greek* and preſent *Hebrew* Alphabet, there are ſome who think it not improbable but anciently were the vowels a. e. i. o. u. reſpectivly, and not conſidered as conſonants, upon the ſame rank with the reſt.

It is a great inconvenience attending the orthography of all modern languages, that the pronunciation doth not correſpond with the writing, but that the ſame letters have different ſounds, and the ſame ſounds are often expreſſed by different letters: ſome letters alſo, according to the pronunciation, are

are ſuperfluous in ſome words, in others letters are wanting. This is chiefly a mark of their derivation from other languages: ſince, in many of thoſe differences, the ſpelling leans to the ancients, when the pronunciation is modern. Thus the *(p)* in the word *receipt* is not pronounced; but it ſhews the derivation of the word from *recipio* in *Latin*. Some words of the ſame ſound are ſpelled differently, to preſerve a diſtinction in writing, as *air* to breath, from *heir* of an eſtate. Other words, on the contrary, which are ſpelled in the ſame manner, are pronounced differently, to preſerve a diſtinction in ſpeaking; as I *read,* and I have *read.* There would be no foundation for ſeveral of theſe differences in a primitive language: for, ſince the original uſe of written characters was ſimply to expreſs the very ſounds men actually uſed, they muſt, at leaſt as near as they could, have been made to correſpond with the pronunciation.

The

The Alphabets of all Languages were for many ages ſingle, the diſtinction of letters into *Capitals* and *ſmall-letters* being, comparatively, of late contrivance. In general, the letters that we uſe as capitals were the common and only characters of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, the ſmall letters being a contraction of them for the ſake of expedition. Several nations of the *Eaſt* have different ſets of letters, and ſome which they always write larger than others; yet they do not uſe them as we do our *capitals*, to diſtinguſh particular words, by placing them ſingle at their head, but for the *titles of books*, or whole books for particular uſes. In moſt *Eaſtern* languages, letters, for the convenience of joining, are ſhaped differently, according as they are to be placed at the beginning, the middle, or the end of a word.

Characters were not uſed originally to expreſs

expreſs any thing beſides *words*. Characters to denote *pauſes*, and ſeveral affections of the ſenſe are of late invention, for the *Ancients* wrote the words of a ſentence contiguous, with fewer intervals than are made in pronouncing them; as appears by ancient manuſcripts. It is ſaid that characters to expreſs pauſes were invented about the year of Chriſt 360; but at firſt they made uſe of nothing but dots for that purpoſe: the different poſition of them expreſſing the different length of the pauſes: by degrees different marks were introduced, and at length different affections of the ſenſe were noted by characters, to make the meaning more eaſily apprehended: of this nature are the notes of interrogation, and exclamation, placed at the cloſe of a ſentence.

All modern *European* languages, and *Latin* are pointed in the ſame manner.

The

The *Greek* is pointed with ſome variation, the *Semicolon* in other languages becoming the note of interrogation in that. In *Greek* there is alſo only one pauſe intermediate between the *comma* and the *period*, and it is a ſingle dot placed at the top of the line.

The *Hebrew* hath thirty two accents, which alſo ſerve to denote pauſes; but, according to *Capellus* they were only invented by the *Mazorites* about the year 400 after Chriſt.

Characters are alſo uſed various other ways to direct the pronunciation of words. Some are called *accents*, and formerly ſhewed when to raiſe or depreſs the voice, without lengthening or ſhortening the ſyllable. In modern languages accents confound both; for the ſyllable that is accented is pronounced ſtronger, if not upon

a higher key, and at the ſame time lengthened. Characters are alſo uſed to ſhew the omiſſion of letters in words and various other purpoſes. They are liable to frequent innovations.

LECTURE

LECTURE the FOURTH.

OF THE

GENERAL DISTRIBUTION

OF WORDS

INTO CLASSES.

IN order to give a clear account of the principles of Language and Grammar, we muſt endeavour to trace the uſe of words to their origin, and through the whole courſe

of their progreſs; from their firſt rude ſtate, to their laſt refinements.

It is natural to ſuppoſe that the firſt words which mankind, in the moſt early ages of the world, would invent and apply, would be names for ſenſible objects; as of animals, vegetables, the parts of the human body, the ſun, moon, &c. becauſe theſe are the things that would firſt occur to their obſervation, and which their neceſſities would oblige them to have the moſt conſtant recourſe to. These names conſtitute the firſt, and moſt important claſs of words, under the Grammatical appellation of NOUNS SUBSTANTIVE. The names of individuals would be proper and incommunicable, as *Adam, Eve, Paradice,* &c. other names would be applied, by analogy, to every other of the ſame ſpecies, and conſtitute the general names of *men, tree, river, garden,* &c.

After

After obſerving things *in the groſs*, men would attend to their parts and properties; and finding in many of them properties which they had in common with others; as *hardneſs*, *ſoftneſs*, *length*, *breadth*, *whiteneſs*, *redneſs*, &c. they would get names for ſenſible, and other qualities, which would not belong to any one object or ſpecies of objects in particular, but, upon being named, would recall to their minds ideas of a variety of things indifferently. Theſe properties or qualities, conſidered in themſelves, abſtracted from any ſubject to which they belong, convey to our minds certain determinate ideas, and therefore the names of them are nouns of the ſame claſs with thoſe abovementioned; but conſidered as exiſting in, and inſeparable from the particular ſubjects to which they belonged, it would be found convenient to refine upon the language, and give the preceding words

another form. Thus a *lion*, inſtead of being called a beaſt of ſtrength, would be called *ſtrong*. The name of a quality in this form is called an ADJECTIVE. It is obſervable that the *Hebrew* and other very ancient and ſimple languages have few adjectives. *(a)* Indeed, as they expreſs the ſame ideas with their correſponding ſubſtantives, only more conveniently modified for ſeveral particular uſes, they are not abſolutely neceſſary for the purpoſes of ſpeech.

As properties or qualities of things, when uſed

(a) Thus St. *Paul*, following the *Hebrew* idiom, ſays 2 Cor. iv. 6. *The light of the knowledge of the glory of* GOD; when adjectives, in a language that abounded with them, might have been introduced with advantage, and have given the expreſſion the following more intelligible turn, *The enlightening knowledge of the glorious* GOD.

uſed in the form of adjectives, imply ſome ſubject to which they belong, they form no determinate idea without their ſubſtantives, and are therefore always uſed in conjunction with them: for example, when I ſay *ſtrong*, I do not mean ſtrength in general; which would ſuggeſt an abſtract idea, capable of being the ſubject of a propoſition or argumentation; but ſome particular thing that hath ſtrength: the mind is therefore in ſuſpence, till I name ſomething in conjunction with it, as *ſtrong man*, *ſtrong horſe*, &c.

In uſing a name that is common to a whole ſpecies we may either intend to ſpeak of ſome of the ſpecies in general, or of one or more than one in particular. To mark this difference, ſome languages prefix to nouns words which, becauſe of their importance, they diſtinguiſh by a particular name, viz.

ARTICLES: the article *indefinite* in the former case and the article *definite* in the latter. In *English (a)* is used for the former, and *the* for the latter. Thus *a man* is any one man indifferently; whereas *the man* means some particular man, either mentioned before, or so circumstanced as not to be mistaken.

Articles are necessarily of the nature of adjectives, as they always imply some substantive to which they belong, which they characterize, and when named without them leave the mind under the same kind of suspense. The same characters are also found to belong to the words *this, that, every,* and the like; which some Grammarians call articles, and others pronouns. Grammarians who make articles a part of speech distinct from adjectives define them to be *words which fix or limit the signification of nouns,* which

which is true of all adjectives whatever. For do not the words *great, ſmall, wiſe, all, every,* &c. and, in like manner, every other adjective fix, limit, or aſcertain the ſignification of nouns, which, without ſuch words, would be more unreſtrained and indeterminate. *(a)*

As the ſole uſe of ſpeech is mutual information, men would never have occaſion to name any object but to affirm ſomething concerning it: their firſt efforts in ſpeech therefore

(a) Even when a natural property of a thing is expreſſed by an adjective, we, as it were, limit and confine the attention to that particular conſideration of it: for inſtance, when we ſay *mortal men*, we mean men, not conſidered univerſally, but as mortal only: and unleſs the nature of the diſcourſe require that we view the ſubſtantive in that particular light, it is an impropriety in ſtyle to mention that epithet.

therefore would be to form a propoſition. A *propoſition*, accurately ſpeaking, is a ſentence which expreſſes the agreement or coincidence of two ideas. To expreſs this agreement or coincidence, men would probably, at firſt, only name them one after the other; as children do when they firſt learn to ſpeak: for example, they would ſay *a lion ſtrength*, or *a lion ſtrong*, inſtead of ſaying *a lion hath ſtrength*, or *a lion is ſtrong:* it would ſoon, however, be found convenient to introduce ſome word to denote this affirmation. This word which ſimply expreſſes the affirmation, or ſignifies the agreement between two ideas is called *the verb ſubſtantive*, and every word that is called a verb includes it.

Every ſentence that contains an affirmation muſt, neceſſarily, contain three ideas; namely two of nouns, the agreement of which

which is expreſſed, and one of the verb ſubſtantive, which denotes their agreement; though the terms may be ſo contrived, as that one of them ſhall imply any two of the ideas, or all the three. For example, in the ſentence *He is ſtanding*, the two extreme terms are both nouns, or names, the word *he* being a ſubſtitute for the name of ſome particular perſon; and the word *ſtanding* the name of a particular poſture. The ſentence affirms that the poſture of the perſon referred to by the word *he*, and that which anſwers to the word *ſtanding* are the ſame; and the verb *is* expreſſes this ſameneſs or agreement: but the nature of the *Latin* language is ſuch, that any two, or all of theſe ideas may be repreſented by one term. *Ille eſt ſtans* contains them all ſeparate: in *Eſt ſtans* the two former are united: in *Ille ſtat* the two latter: and in *ſtat* all the

the three. Our own language admits of the union of the two laſt as *He ſtands.*

Every word which, when analized, is found to contain the idea of the ſimple affirmation is called a VERB. To define it ſtrictly and univerſally. A *Verb* either expreſſes the ſimple affirmation only, or the ſimple affirmation joined with the name of the ſtate or condition of the ſubject concerning which the affirmation is made; which ſubject alſo, in ſome languages, and in ſome circumſtances, *is likewiſe* comprehended in it.

This general definition eaſily comprehends all kinds of verbs, whether *active, paſſive, or neuter.* Thus in the ſentence *Pompeius pugnat, Pompey is fighting,* the verb *pugnat* implies both the ſimple affirmation, and the name of the ſtate or condition

tion that Pompey is ſaid to be in, namely *fighting*. In *Pompeius occiditur*, *Pompey is killed;* the verb *occiditur* implies the ſame, namely the ſimple affirmation, and the ſtate or condition of the ſubject of it, *ſlain*. Laſtly, in *Pompeius requieſcit* the verb implies both the affirmation and the ſtate of *reſt*.

Beſides the coincidence, or agreement of ideas, the purpoſe of thinking and ſpeaking requires that other affections or relations of them be attended to. Theſe are expreſſed in different manners in different languages. I ſhall illuſtrate this by one relation; namely that of cauſe and effect; ſpeaking of the divine being and of the world, and intending to expreſs the former to be the cauſe of the latter, we ſhould, in *Engliſh*, put the word (of) between them, and ſay *the creator of the world*. In *Latin* the termination

nation of the latter undergoes an alteration, as *creator mundi*. In *Hebrew* the alteration takes place in the former.

Words appropriated to denote the relations of nouns to a part, or the whole of the ſentence are called PREPOSITIONS. They abound in all languages: for it would create endleſs confuſion to vary the termination of words for every different relation. Even in *Greek* and *Latin*, only the principal, and more uſual relations of words are expreſſed by a change of termination.

Among the laſt orders of words I ſhall mention thoſe which are ſubſtitutes for other words.

CONJUNCTIONS are words which connect ſentences together, and expreſs their relation to one another: but they are not abſolutely

abſolutely neceſſary to ſpeech; becauſe, in all caſes, the ſentences which they connect may be thrown into one; and the only advantage of them is, that they give an eaſier turn to an expreſſion which would otherwiſe be perplexed and aukward. For example, I can either ſay, in one formal ſentence, *His command was the reaſon of my writing*; or, more elegantly, in two, with a conjunction, *I wrote becauſe he ordered me.* The word *becauſe* connects theſe two ſentences, which are formed out of one, and ſhews the relation they bear to one another; which is that of *cauſe and effect.*

In like manner, there are no conjunctions whatever but what may be ſaid to ſupply the place of other words; ſince they only change the form of expreſſing the ſame things. Even the ſimple conjunction *and,* ſtrictly ſpeaking, is not neceſſary. We may either

ſay, *Cæſar conquered Gaul, and enſlaved his country;* or, *Cæſar conquered Gaul: Cæſar enſlaved his country.* In this ſentence, the uſe of the conjunction is to ſupercede the neceſſity of repeating the ſubject of the propoſition. In the ſentence, *Alexander and Cæſar were great conquerors,* the conjunction ſerves inſtead of repeating what Logicians call the predicate of the propoſition. If it be ſaid that the conjunction is ſtill underſtood, though the ſentence be reſolved into two, and that we ought to ſay, *Alexander was a great conqueror, and Cæſar was a great conqueror;* it is evident that the word *and* is nothing more than a contraction for *I, with the ſame truth, affirm;* or ſome ſuch periphraſis.

This claſs of words, therefore, muſt be ranked rather among the elegancies than the neceſſaries of a language; though they are ſo

ſo nearly neceſſary, that they claim the firſt place among thoſe that are not ſo.

To avoid the repetition of names of very frequent occurrence, all nations have found the convenience of uſing ſhorter words in their place, or general terms inſtead of particular, when the diſcourſe was ſo circumſtanced as to prevent any miſtake of the particulars referred to. For example, inſtead of laying every ſpeaker under the neceſſity of repeating his own name every time he mentioned his having done any thing, or that of the perſon he was ſpeaking to whenever he addreſſed him, we uſe *I* in the former caſe, and *thou* in the latter; which are made univerſal terms, being equally applicable to every perſon who ſpeaks, and every perſon who is ſpoken to. Alſo, inſtead of naming any perſon or thing very often, after having uſed the proper name once, we

afterwards content ourſelves with uſing the words *He, ſhe, it,* &c. inſtead of it. Theſe words are termed PRONOUNS, being uſed inſtead of nouns.

The words called ADVERBS are alſo contractions for other words, or rather cluſters of words, as *here,* for *in this place; there, in that place; wiſely, in a wiſe manner; dayly, every day,* &c. *(a)*

The

(a) It would likewiſe contribute greatly to the eaſe and diſtinctneſs of our conceptions, if we were to conſider many other words and modifications of words, as ſubſtitutes for different words, and contractions of more complex expreſſions. For inſtance, the *imperative mood* of verbs may be conſidered as a contracted form of expreſſing a ſentence, which would, in more words, indicate the command of the ſpeaker to the hearer. Thus *ſcribe,* write thou, is equivalent to *jubeo ut ſcribas,* I command thee to write. Alſo when we interrogate as *ſcribiſne?* doſt thou write? it is

The words uſually known by the name of INTERJECTIONS are more properly the inarticulate expreſſions of the paſſions of *joy*, *ſorrow*, *anger*, *ſurprize*, and the like, than appropriated to any particular and determinate ideas. They are, accordingly, obſerved to reſemble the inarticulate ſounds of brute animals.

To give a brief ſummary of this lecture. All the words of which the languages of men conſiſt are either the names of things and qualities (the ideas of which exiſt in the mind) or words adapted to denote the relati-

the ſame thing as if we ſaid in more words, *I aſk whether you be writing?* This analyſis of the more complex parts of ſpeech makes our general definitions of words more diſtinct, and prevents them from interfering with one another.

ons they bear to one another; or laſtly, a compendium for other words, with or without their relations. The names of things or qualities are termed *Subſtantives* and *Adjectives:* the ſubſtitutes of theſe are *Pronouns*. Their coincidence or agreement is expreſſed by *Verbs:* The relations of words by *Prepoſitions*, and of ſentences by *Conjunctions*. And *Adverbs* are contracted forms of ſpeech, which may be analized into words belonging to other claſſes.

Having given a general view of the diſtribution of words into claſſes, I ſhall conſider each of the claſſes more particularly.

LECTURE the FIFTH.

OF

NOUNS.

OF the kinds of words above enumerated, ſome may be conſidered in different reſpects, as they are capable of different affections: for example, in names of things or *nouns*, we may conſider their number, ſex, &c. The names of qualities or *adjectives* admit of the degrees of more or leſs: In *verbs* we may conſider the perſon, the time and other circumſtances, of an affirmation.

Theſe

Theſe affections are, in ſome languages, denoted by different modifications of the word, as by a change of termination. &c. in which languages theſe words are ſaid to be *declinable*, in other languages theſe different affections are expreſſed by other additional words, or by their poſition only.

With reſpect to *ſubſtantives*, ſome of them are names of one particular perſon or thing; as *Athens*, a particular town; *Alexander*, a particular man; *Danube* a particular river. Others are common to a whole ſpecies, as *town*, *man*, *river*. In conſidering nouns of this latter kind, the firſt thing that occurs to us is, that we may intend to ſpeak of one only, or of more of the ſpecies to which that name is common. It hath been found convenient, therefore, I believe, in almoſt all languages, to uſe a different modification of the term when we intend

intend to expreſs one only, or more of the kind; thus *homo* is one man only, *homines* more men than one.(a) The one is called the *Singular*, and the other *Plural* NUMBER.

As number is infinite, few nations have thought of diſtinguiſhing any particular number of things more than one by modifications of the term, but do it by diſtinct words, expreſſing the particular number intended: for example, there is no other method of expreſſing *three men* in Latin than by ſaying *tres homines*. Though, with reſpect to things which nature hath formed in pairs, and ſometimes even things not connected in that manner, ſome nations have contrived a particular modification called

(a) In the *Peruvian* tongue, *Reland* ſays, the plural number is expreſſed, not by a change of the verbal termination, but by the addition of certain particles.

called the *Dual* number to expreſs them. In Greek χειρ is a hand, χειρε two hands, and χειρεσ any indefinite number of hands.

But this modification is intirely ſuperfluous: and even when, in particular caſes, there is no proviſion in a language to expreſs the different numbers of Singular and Plural, the inconvenience is not perceived, if any other words in the ſentence mark the diſtinction. In *Engliſh*, though we ſay *a ſheep feeds*, and *ſheep feed*, and the word *ſheep*, to which the number properly belongs, have no modification to expreſs it by, yet, as it is plainly pointed out by the words it is connected with, the ſentence is ſufficiently free from ambiguity.

What we may call the caprice of all languages hath expreſſed many things which are

are really ſingular by a plural termination, as *bellows* in Engliſh, and *caſtra* in Latin. In conſtruction, the words connected with them muſt conform to the caſual termination, and not follow the ſenſe; as *the bellows blow*, not *blows*; caſtra *ponuntur* not *ponitur*.(a)

In many languages nouns are differently modified according to the different ſex, namely male or female, which they either really are of, or that is arbitrarily aſcribed to them. The male conſtitutes the *Maſculine*, and the female the *Feminine* GENDER. In others a third claſs is made of thoſe which are of neither ſex and is termed *neuter*. Other languages,

(a) Though in *Hebrew* it be often otherwiſe as *Sapientiæ clamat* and *the* LORD *ſpake*

languages, particularly the *Engliſh*, (b) make no difference in the termination, but when there is a real difference of ſex; and even this real difference is not always expreſſed by a change of termination, but by words totally different. Thus *lion* is the male, and *lioneſs* the female; but the female correſponding to a *horſe* is termed a *mare*. Indeed in languages in which the difference of ſex is moſt ſcrupulouſly attended to, different words are appropriated to them where the difference is very ſtriking; as *vir* a man, *mulier* a woman.

With reſpect to ſex, the *Engliſh* Language ſeems to have followed nature, and other languages, by aiming at two great refinement

(b) Of modern European languages, the *German* and the *Lapland* (and perhaps ſome others) have neuters.

refinement, have departed from it, without gaining any advantage, which can be called an equivalent, for the abſurdity and additional intricacy attending the practice. Why is *lapis* maſculine, when *rupes* is feminine, and *ſaxum* neuter?

Beſides the affections of number and ſex, there are few languages but expreſs ſome of the principal relations of one word to another by a further change of termination, or ſome other modification. In *Latin* and *Greek* ſix of the principal circumſtances in which nouns are uſed are expreſſed by a change of termination: they are called CASES and are the *Nominative*, *Genitive*, *Dative*, *Accuſative*, *Vocative*, and *Ablative*. By the addition of prepoſitions to ſome particular caſes of words, they expreſs the remaining circumſtances and relations. The application of theſe caſes is by no means

made with ſufficient judgment, ſince very different relations are expreſſed promiſcuouſly by the ſame caſe, and the ſame relation by different caſes.

The uſe of the caſes in the *Greek* and *Latin* languages may perhaps be defined in the following general manner.

The *Nominative* is the caſe in which a thing is barely named, with reſpect to ſome ſubſequent affirmation; as *ſol ortus eſt, the ſun is riſen.*

The *Genitive* denotes property or poſſeſſion; or that to which the thing it is connected with belongs, as *filius Pompeii, the ſon of Pompey.* Q. Whoſe ſon is he? A. Pompey's. In like manner, *pater Pompeii,* the father of Pompey. Q. Whoſe father

father is he? A. Pompey's.(a)

This very general uſe of the *Genitive*, which comprehends in it, as ſome ſay, thirteen different relations, hath occaſioned an ambiguity in ſome expreſſions where it occurs. Thus *amor dei* may either ſignify the love that God bears to man, or the love that man bears to God; becauſe, according to either of the two ſenſes, the queſtion ſuggeſted by the definition, to try the propriety of it's application, admits of a direct anſwer. Q. Whoſe is this love? A. God's. either as the object, or the ſubject of it.

(a) The remains of ſome of the *Saxon* genitives which ended in *es*, are preſerved in the apoſtrophe and *s* in *Engliſh*; as *Solomon's wiſdom*: in *Chaucer's* time, the *e* and conſequent additional ſyllable were in uſe; as *Goddes folk*, *God's folk*, or *God's people*.

The *Dative* caſe characterizes the perſon or thing to which another that it is connected with is given, attributed, or aſcribed; as *do librum puero*, I give a book to the boy. Q. To whom do I give it? A. To the boy.

This definition of the *Dative* interfering in ſome circumſtances with the Genitive is the reaſon why, in thoſe inſtances, the caſes are uſed promiſcuouſly; as *filius Pompeii*, or *filius Pompeio*. For ſince, in the firſt inſtance, Pompey anſwering to the queſtion, whoſe ſon is he? determines its right to be put in the genitive caſe; its equally anſwering to the queſtion to whom is he attributed, or aſcribed, viz. as a ſon? doth likewiſe declare its right to the Dative, according to ſuch definitions as muſt be made to comprehend all the relations thoſe caſes

caſes are uſed to expreſs. (a)

The *Accuſative* denotes the perſon or thing on which the action of a verb tranſitive paſſeth; as *Cæſar vicit Pompeum*, Cæſar conquered Pompey. Whom did Cæſar conquer? A. Pompey.

The *Vocative* is only uſed in calling to a perſon: as this caſe is of very little uſe, it is generally the ſame with the nominative.

The *Ablative* is made uſe of to expreſs

(a) Mr. *Harris* defines the *Genitive* to be a caſe which is formed to expreſs all relations commencing from itſelf; and the *Dative* to expreſs all relations tending to itſelf. The obſervation is ingenious, and generally juſt: but it ſeems to be too philoſophical for ſo vague and irregular an uſe as is actually made of thoſe caſes. In particular, there is, in this deſcription, no proviſion for the promiſcuous uſe of them: for how can any word be in a relation which may be conſidered indifferently either as commencing from itſelf, or tending to itſelf?

many other relations of words to words, in conjunction with prepoſitions, appropriated to the particular relations; as *in horto, in the garden: cum exercitu,* with an army. When no prepoſition accompanies it, it generally denotes the inſtrument wherewith a thing is done; as *gladio,* with a ſword. The *Accuſative* alſo and, in Greek, the *Genitive* and *Dative* too, are uſed in conjunction with prepoſitions to denote other relations than thoſe which they expreſs when alone.

In *Engliſh,* and moſt other modern languages, prepoſitions are uſed without any change of caſe, to anſwer the purpoſes of the *Genitive, Dative,* and *Ablative:* and what the Latins and Greeks diſtinguiſhed by the *Accuſative* caſe, we diſtinguiſh by its place after the verb, when the ſenſe will not ſuffice to determine it; as, *Alexander vicit Darium,*

Darium, Alexander conquered Darius.(a)

It is obſervable, as was hinted at before, that in *Hebrew*, to expreſs that which makes the Genitive in *Latin* and *Greek*, the alteration doth not affect the ſame word that undergoes the change of termination in thoſe languages, but the word which in them remains unchanged. For example in *verba regis, the words of the king*, the latter word hath been changed from *rex*; whereas, to expreſs the ſame thing in *Hebrew*, we muſt ſay in which the former hath been changed from

The

(a) The caſes of nouns in the *Welch* language are expreſſed by a change of the initial letters, if they be of thoſe that are mutable, according to the prepoſition or word that governs them. E. G. *ty* is a houſe; *dodrefn fy nhy* is the furniture of my houſe; *iw dy*, to his houſe; *prynodd dy*, he bought a houſe; and *allan o'i thy*, out of her houſe.

The *Hebrew*, and other *Eaſtern* tongues have this further peculiarity, that in them nouns undergo another change of termination, according to the perſon or perſons to whom the thing they ſpeak of belongs, or according to the pronouns poſſeſſive which, in other languages, are joined with them. For example, *my word;* which in *Latin* is *verbum meum,* in Hebrew is from a word, and this occaſions a prodigious variety of terminations in their nouns. In reality, theſe pronominal terminations are the pronouns poſſeſſive contracted, and affixed to the nouns; from whence they have obtained the name of affixes.(a)

There

(a) There is ſomething analogous to this in the *Welch* language; in that it hath thirteen pronouns affixed to propoſitions, as *at*, *to*, *attaf*, to me; *attat*, to thee, *atto*, to him.

There are few languages in which ſubſtantives do not ſometimes become *Diminutives*, by a change of termination, that is, when we would expreſs ſomething leſs than the uſual natural ſize, we have not always recourſe to an adjective, expreſſing the degree of diminution; but change the word itſelf for that purpoſe: thus *rivus* a river, becomes *rivulus*, a rivulet. The *Italian* tongue not only abounds in Diminutives, but alſo in *Augmentatives* which expreſs ſomething exceeding the natural ſize, as from *capello* a hat, comes *capellone* a great hat, *capellacio* a great ugly hat. They are not quite unknown in other languages.

LECTURE

LECTURE the SIXTH.

OF

ADJECTIVES

AND

PRONOUNS.

ADJECTIVES, on account of their connection with Subſtantives, as they always ſuppoſe, and refer to them, have in ſome languages, all the modifications of ſubſtantives; being declined with number,

number, caſe, and gender. (a) Whereas in other languages, (ſince the diſtinctions of number, caſe, and gender, are ſufficiently marked by the ſubſtantives) adjectives are uſed without any variation in thoſe reſpects. Thus in the expreſſion *good men*, it is ſufficiently evident, from the form of the word *men*, that more than one are meant; and

(a) In languages that admit of a change of termination on account of gender, men and women cannot, in many caſes, uſe the ſame form of expreſſion promiſcuouſly. E. G. In *Latin* a man ſays *ego ſum liber*, a woman, *ego ſum libera*. But it is remarkable that, in ſome of the *Caribbee Iſlands*, the men and women hardly call any thing by the ſame name. This *Reland* conjectures to have taken its riſe from the conqueſt of the iſlands, by a people who ſpoke a language different from that of the old inhabitants: in conſequence of which the men were expelled, but the women ſtayed with the conquerors; and, retaining their own tongue, taught a great part of it to their daughters.

and therefore that any alteration in the word *good* would be unneceſſary.

But as adjectives denote the qualities or properties of things, and theſe are eaſily perceived to admit of the degrees *more and leſs*; in moſt languages, theſe degrees are expreſſed by different modifications of the word. For example, *durus* is *hard*, the quality in general; *durior*, *harder*, the quality increaſed; and *duriſſimus*, *hardeſt*, or poſſeſſing the quality in the higheſt degree. In ſome languages the term is farther varied to expreſs a very ſmall degree of a quality, as *whitiſh*, *a little white*.

But in *Hebrew*, *French*, and ſome other languages, theſe different degrees of quality are expreſſed, not by any change of termination, but by other words appropriated to that purpoſe; as *ſage*, wiſe; *plus ſage*, *wiſer*;

wiſer; le plus ſage, wiſeſt. The *Hebrew*, in order to expreſs a very great degree of a quality, repeat the ſimple expreſſion of it; as *good, good;* that is *very good.* (a)

This compariſon of adjectives is founded on the ſame principle with the Diminutives, and Augmentatives of ſubſtantives; but as the variation of degree is more eaſily perceived, and oftener uſed in adjectives, the compariſon of adjectives hath become more general.

(a) The *Welch*, beſides the three degrees of compariſon, common to other languages, hath a ſort of compariſon which imports, ſometimes *equality*, and ſometimes *admiration:* it is formed by adding *ed* to the poſitive; as *glan*, fair; *Cyn laned ac ynteſ*, as fair as he; *glaned yw*, how fair he is.

ARTICLES, being uſed in the ſame manner as adjectives, are, in all languages, inflected as other adjectives are. They are not indeed compared; but neither do many other adjectives admit of compariſon, as *omnis all*, and many others.

In languages that have only one article, it is generally definite; the word itſelf without the article being then uſed in the indefinite ſenſe. Thus in *Engliſh*, which has no article indefinite in the plural number, *men* means any men; and *the men*, ſome particular men: in the ſame manner as *a man* means any man, and *the man* ſome particular man.

Of PRONOUNS.

PRONOUNS, being nothing more than commodious ſubſtitutes for nouns, are not entitled to a diſtinct claſs among the different kinds of words; but might all of them have been ranked under the heads of ſubſtantives, or adjectives; only the univerſal irregularity of their inflexions makes it neceſſary to give them a diſtinct conſideration.

Pronouns are words of ſuch frequent occurrence, that even in thoſe languages which admit of few modifications of other words, ſeveral are, in a manner, obliged, for the greater eaſe and certainty of diſtinction, to be introduced here. Thus the *Engliſh*, and *French*, who do not decline nouns with caſes, have ſeveral caſes for

ſome of their pronouns as *Je, moi, me; I, me; thou, thee; who, whom, whoſe.*(a)

Pronouns are either barely ſubſtitutes for proper names of perſons, and are therefore themſelves ſubſtantives, or for perſons and things in particular circumſtances. The firſt are diſtinguiſhed by the name of *perſonal* pronouns; and the reſt by ſeveral other denominations; according to the various circumſtances in which the perſon or thing they relate to is conſidered, as *Poſſeſſive, Relative,* and *Demonſtrative.*

Ego, I, which is an univerſal ſubſtitute for the perſon who ſpeaks, is termed *the firſt perſon. Tu, thou,* ſtanding for the name

(a) The *Teutonic* language, and that dialect of it the *Saxon*, from which the preſent *Engliſh* have is derived, ~~hath~~ a dual number in their pronouns.

name of the perſon ſpoken to, *the ſecond perſon*; and *Ille, he*, the perſon ſpoken of, *the third perſon*. Their plurals *We, Ye, They*, ſtand in the ſame order. *(a)*

(a) It is very entertaining to obſerve how differently the perſonal pronouns are applied, in the complimental language of different nations. Ancient languages, and thoſe of people who pretend to no politeneſs, admit of no other than the ſecond perſon ſingular when we addreſs any ſingle perſon; as *if thou pleaſe*, or, *if it pleaſe thee*. The *Engliſh* and *French* uſe the ſecond perſon plural; as *ſ'il vous plait, if you pleaſe*. The *Spaniards* uſe the third perſon ſingular; as *if he pleaſe*; and the *Germans* the third perſon plural, *if they pleaſe*. In the *Singalian* tongue, the perſonal pronouns are changed two or three ways, according to the perſon they repreſent. E. G. *too* and *u* ſignify *he* to or concerning a ſervant, or perſon of low rank; *umba* and *undoeoe* expreſs the ſame with tenderneſs and reſpect, as when a father ſpeaks of his ſon; and inferiors apply the words *tamunwahanſa*, *tu*, and *ohuwahanſa* to their ſuperiors.

Alſo in the *Malayan* tongue a perſon addreſſing an equal ſays *beta* I; to an inferior *ako*, to a king *patek*,

I ſhall illuſtrate the pronominal uſe of words under the other denominations by giving inſtances of each of them.

The *Demonſtrative* pronouns (ſo called becauſe they clearly *point out* and ſhew what we refer to). *Cato and Cicero were cotemporaries:* This *was famous for his eloquence, the* other *for his integrity.* In this ſentence, the pronoun *this* is a ſubſtitute for the name of *Cicero,* in the circumſtance of being named laſt; and *other* of *Cato,* as being only perſon who remained to be ſpoken of.

Poſſeſſive. His houſe, that is the houſe of ſome particular perſon mentioned before. Theſe pronouns poſſeſſive have the ſame uſe

or *hamba,* which ſignifies a ſervant. In the ſame manner are *thou* and *he* expreſſed variouſly. *Reland. De linguis orientalibus.*

uſe as the Genitive caſes of their correſpondent perſonal pronouns, being the ſubſtitutes of perſons under the character of poſſeſſors, or owners of the thing whoſe name they are joined with. *(a)*

Relative, referring to a noun or ſentence going before; as *The houſe which I have built*, that is *which houſe*. The uſe of this pronoun will be conſidered more largely in the conſtruction of ſentences. *(b)*

All

(a) The inhabitants of the *Caribbee* iſlands have a remarkable conciſe method of expreſſing the perſonal prononns; viz. by prefixing a ſingle letter to the word. *m* is my, *b* is thy, and *l* his; as *mari*, my tooth; *bari*, thy tooth; and *lari*, his tooth. *Reland de linguis Americanis.*

(b) The *French* language is peculiarly happy in what their Grammarians call the *pronoun ſupplying;* viz. *le, en, y;* being of vaſtly more eaſy and extenſive application than any relative in other languages, as *Ils ſont heureux, et nous ne le ſommes pas.* They are happy, and we are not;

All theſe three kinds of Pronouns, as they refer to ſome ſubſtantives with which (in languages that change the terminations of nouns on the account of number, caſe, &c.) they agree, and without which they have no determinate meanings, are of the nature of Adjectives.

In *Hebrew* not only Pronouns of the third perſon (as in all other languages) but even

i. e. not happy; which is particularly referred to by the French *le*. *Newton vous plait, vous en parlez toujours*, You like *Newton*, you always ſpeak of him. *Quand un homne eſt mort, on n'y penſe plus;* when a man is dead, he is no more thought of.

The *French* pronoun *on* is likewiſe of as extenſive uſe as a nominative caſe to verbs, as the pronoun ſupplying, which is governed of them; and in particular with the active voice of verbs is very elegantly made uſe of inſtead of the paſſive; as *on tint hier un conſeil a Whitehall:* yeſterday a counſil was held at Whitehall.

even the ſecond perſon hath a diſtinction of ſex, being *thou man*, and *thou woman.* (a)

The number of Pronouns is peculiarly difficult to determine in all languages; owing, not only to their being, in fact, chiefly, adjectives; but alſo, to this, that the ſame term hath ſometimes what is called a pronominal uſe, and ſometimes not; which Grammarians have not ſufficiently attended to.

LECTURE

(a) The reaſon why the third perſon admits of the diſtinction of gender more generally than the firſt and ſecond, is becauſe the ſex of the perſon ſpoken of, who is abſent, cannot be known without ſome ſuch proviſion; whereas it is unneceſſary with reſpect to the firſt and ſecond perſons, who are always preſent when they are mentioned.

LECTURE the SEVENTH.

OF

VERBS.

VERBS have been defined to be either the ſimple affirmation, which makes only one verb ſubſtantive, *(a)* or (as the actual ſtructure of all languages obliges us to conſider it) the union of the ſimple affirmation with another term expreſſing the ſtate or condition of the ſubject concerning which

(a) It may perhaps be convenient to reſolve even the verb ſubſtantive itſelf into a ſimple affirmation and an adjective or participle; ſince

which the affirmation is made. (a) A verb therefore, being a complex word, admits of as many modifications as each of the ideas which it includes; and moreover thoſe which ariſe from the combination of their ſeparate modifications.

The

ſum, I am, may be conſidered as containing the three ideas expreſſed by, *ego ſum exiſtens*, I am being; but the verb *ſum*, in this laſt ſentence, can admit of no farther reſolution.

(a) Mr. *Harris*, after defining all verbs, which are ſtrictly ſo called, to be words which denote energies, is afterwards obliged to acknowledge that there are ſome which appear to denote nothing more than a mere ſimple adjective, joined to an aſſertion; as , it equalleth; *albeo*, I am white, &c. But ſince theſe words, and many others of the ſame nature, are by all grammarians (whether juſtly or not) univerſally called verbs, and have the inflections of verbs; is it not better to comprize them under the general definition of verbs? eſpecially ſince they are all, with equal eaſe, reſolvable into a ſimple affirmation, joined to an adjective or participle; which may be called an adjective or attribute of time.

The ſtate or condition united with the ſimple affirmation is moſt commonly one which implies ſome energy, or the producing ſome effect, as *loving*, *eating*, *killing*. This effect may be produced by the ſubject of the affirmation, or it may take place upon it. This hath, in ſome languages, given occaſion to a two-fold diſtinction of verbs: for, in the former caſe, the verb is ſaid to be *active*; in the latter, it is differently terminated, and called *paſſive*. Thus when I ſay *Petrus amat*, *Peter loves*, the action of loving proceeds from Peter, and the verb is active, when I ſay *Petrus amatur*, *Peter is loved*. I mean that the action of loving terminates in, or takes place upon Peter, and the verb aſſumes a paſſive form.

In thoſe languages which admit of the diſtinction of verbs into active and paſſive, thoſe verbs which imply no idea of producing

ducing any effect out of the agent are called *Neuters*. As *Petrus ſedet, Peter is ſitting*. in which the ſtate or condition that Peter is affirmed to be in doth not contain the idea of any effect which can paſs from one thing to another.

The *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin* languages contain this modification of verbs, but it is univerſally wanting in the modern *European* tongues, which expreſs the ſame idea by ſeparating the affirmation from the word which expreſſeth the ſtate or condition of the ſubject, when the meaning is intended to be paſſive; and making uſe of ſuch a term as conveys no other idea than that of receiving the effect; confining the uſual form of the verb to the active ſenſe. In the ſentence *Peter is killed*, the ſtate killed, which is affirmed of Peter, implies receiving the effect, and the only ſenſe that remains

for the ſimple form of the verb, *(Peter kills)* is that of giving it.

A thing may not only be expreſsly affirmed, but may alſo be ſpoken of under ſeveral reſtrictions or limitations, and in connection with, or dependance upon other affirmations. Several of theſe manners or modes of ſpeaking of an event have been ſelected, and made the foundation of a further diſtinction of MOODS or *Modes* in verbs. Of theſe the *Greeks* have the greateſt number. The *Engliſh* admit none of them, but have recourſe to other methods of expreſſing thoſe circumſtances of an affirmation, without giving a different modification to the verb. *(a)*

A direct unconditional aſſertion is in the *Indicative* mood.

(a) Except in one inſtance; for I *am*, if I *be* are different modifications to expreſs different moods.

An event may be ſpoken of as the will or command of another, as *ſcribe, write thou.* This implies that it is the will or command of the perſon who ſpeaks to the perſon ſpoken to that he write: this is the *Imperative* mood. *(a)*

If one event do in any manner depend upon another event, the verb which expreſſeth that which is not the principal, but only that which is the ſecondary, and dependent event, is put in a mood called the *Subjunctive*, as *permitto ut ſcribat*, I permit that he write. This mood is generally preceded by ſome particle expreſſing the connection or dependance of the ſubjunctive ſentence.

(a) In ſeveral languages, the ſenſe of the imperative is often expreſſed by the future and particularly with a negative, as *ne occideris*, thou ſhalt not *kill*. In *Arabic* the imperative is never uſed but when the ſenſe is affirmative.

Sometimes both the indicative ſentence and the connecting participle are underſtood, as *vivat rex*, let the king live: a verb denoting a wiſh being underſtood as, *opto ut rex vivat*, I wiſh that the king may live: *veniat*, *he may come:* that is, *poteſt fieri ut veniat.* In this caſe, when an event is ſpoken of as only poſſible, or liable to contingencies, the mood changes its name, but not its modification, and is called by the Latins the *Potential* mood.

An event mentioned as the wiſh of any perſon conſtitutes in *Greek* only, the *Optative* mood as I wiſh he may write.

It is eaſy to ſee that, upon theſe principles, moods might have been increaſed almoſt *ad infinitum:* ſince the ways a ſentence may be modified, or vary from a direct aſſertion,

ſertion, are innumerable: for inſtance, for the ſame reaſon that a *wiſh* conſtitutes a mood, an *interrogation* might conſtitute one, a *permiſſion* another, and ſo on without end.

Laſtly, the ſtate or condition implied by the verb may not be affirmed of any other ſubject, but be itſelf the ſubject of an affirmation: in this caſe, it is ſaid to be in the *Infinitive* mood, as *videre eſt jucundum, to ſee is pleaſant. videre,* here, is properly no verb, but the name of a power, act, ſtate, or condition, and therefore a noun ſubſtantive. *(a)*

In *Latin,* inſtead of uſing the infinitive

(a) The *Saxons* have an infinitive of a particular inflection, which they uſe as the *Latins* do their gerunds; as from an *to read* they ſay it is time of reading, or to read.

mood as a noun, in any other caſe than the *Nominative*, (as in the *Genitive*, *Accuſative*, and *Ablative*) they give the word another form, and call it a *Gerund*, as *cupidus ſcribendi, deſirous of writing; peritus in ſcribendo, ſkilful in writing; promptus ad ſcribendum, ready to write:* Whereas the *Greeks* were content to make uſe of the infinitive itſelf for that purpoſe as

. If the verb to which the gerund belongs be not neuter, the effect it expreſſes may terminate ſomewhere, and therefore gerunds require the ſame caſes after them as the verbs themſelves: as *cupidus ſcribendi libros, deſirous of writing books.*

Still leaving out the affirmation, the action or ſtate is ſometimes expreſſed by another noun, in one caſe only, varying in its ſtructure from the former, and is called the

Supine

Supine in um, as *eo piſcatum, I go a fiſhing,* or *to fiſh;* which might have been expreſſed by the gerund, as *eo ad piſcandum.* The *ſupine in u,* or the *latter ſupine,* is the ſame thing in the paſſive ſignification, that the former ſupine is in the active, as *difficile lectu, hard to be read.*

Laſtly, the ſtate or condition expreſſed by the verb without the affirmation is conſidered, in different circumſtances, as a property belonging to a perſon or thing, and is therefore in all reſpects an adjective, though, (partaking of the ſenſe and time of the verb, and being derived from it) it be called a *Participle.* Thus *amans loving,* implies the ſtate or condition of one giving the effect; *amatus, loved,* the having received it; *amaturus, about to love;* the ſtate of being about to give it; and *amandus, to be loved,* a ſtate of

of being to receive it. (a)

The ſame idea derived ſtom the verb may, in different circumſtances, take the form of other adjectives, and even of ſubſtantives; as *amator, a lover,* or the perſon in whom love exiſts as a power or paſſion. But participles, having always been conſidered as more particularly connected with verbs, it may ſuffice in this place to have diſtinctly pointed out their connection.

Some verbs, in the *Greek* and *Latin* languages, admit of modifications ſimilar to the degrees of compariſon in adjectives: for, whereas the ſimple verb directly affirms a certain ſtate concerning the ſubject of it, this

(a) In *Arabic* the participle is often expreſſed by the future tenſe, following the preterite without a copula; as
venerunt flebunt, for *they came weeping*.

this modification, or rather, *derivative verb* denotes only a tendency to it; thus *caleo* ſignifies *to be hot*, *caleſco, to begin to be hot.* Theſe are called *Inceptives.* Another modification, or mode of derivation, intimates a deſire of the ſtate, as *nupturio, I deſire to marry; bellaturio, I deſire to be at war.* Theſe are termed *Deſideratives.*

An affirmation may be conſidered with reſpect to the perſon that makes it, the perſon it is made to, and the perſon or thing that is the ſubject of it. Theſe being the three perſons mentioned in the account of pronouns, the change of terminations occaſioned by theſe circumſtances of an affirmation are called the *Perſons* of verbs. Thus the Latins ſaid, *ſcribo, I write; ſcribis, thou writeſt;* and *ſcribit, he writeth.* They uſe likewiſe different terminations to expreſs the plural perſons; as *ſcribimus, we write;*

write; ſcribitis, ye write; ſcribunt, they write. In *Engliſh*, though we have invented different terminations to expreſs ſome of the perſons, yet they are ſo very few, that, to prevent ambiguity, we always uſe the perſonal pronouns along with the verbs, which there is no occaſion for in *Latin*, *Greek* or *Hebrew*. Even the *French*, who diſtinguiſh all the perſons, do, nevertheleſs, uſe them in conjunction with their correſponding pronouns, as *J'aime, Tu aimes*, &c. *(a)*

LECTURE

(a) In the *Algonkine* tongue, ſpoken by ſeveral nations of *North-America*, the perſons of verbs are denoted, in moſt inſtances, by a ſingle letter or ſyllable prefixed to the verb; as *niſakia*, I love; *kiſakia, thou loveſt; ouſakia, he loveth*, &c. *Reland de linguis Americanis.*

LECTURE the EIGHTH.

OF

VERBS.

HAD mankind nothing to expreſs but their preſent apprehenſions, as *the air is hot;* or univerſal truths, that have no relation to time, as *God is eternal;* the ſimple affirmation would be ſufficient; but in order to ſpeak of things paſt and future, as well as preſent, it was found convenient to introduce a further modification into verbs, to make them capable of expreſſing theſe different circumſtances of time.

This

This is the foundation of the different TENSES of verbs: and as time *paſt* and *future* may be divided into time more or leſs paſt, and time to come at a greater or leſſer diſtance; alſo into paſt and future with reſpect to other events connected with them, many languages admit of a great number of tenſes: but in no language have they been formed upon any accurately juſt and commodious diviſion of time. I ſhall mention ſome of the principal diſtinctions of time that have been actually obſerved in languages.

Time *preſent* is invariable: in no language, therefore, is there more than one *Preſent tenſe.* (a)

An

(a) Some Grammarians, conſidering every action, whether paſt preſent or to come, as either *doing*, or *done*, ſay that there is properly a

An event may be paſt when it is ſpoken of, but have been preſent when another

perfect and imperfect in all the three tenſes; but though time paſt and future, being of indefinite extent, may admit of any ſubdiviſion; time preſent, being properly nothing more than a point, cannot be analogous to them in that reſpect. It ſeems, therefore, to be more natural to refer every action which is compleated at the time of ſpeaking of it to the preterite tenſes, and not to the preſent: and, therefore, that *ſcripſi*, I have written, referring to an action that is confeſſedly paſt, is a preterite tenſe; and not (as the accurate *Dr. Clarke* and others who have followed him would term it) a perfect preſent.

The *Hebrew* and *Arabick* tongues have no method of expreſſing time preſent but by the participle, as I watching, for I watch. The *Welch* language alſo hath no preſent tenſe, except the verb ſubſtantive and two other irregular verbs: inſtead of it, they uſe a circumlocution of the infinitive mood, as *yr wyf yn caru*, which, rendered literally, is *I am into love*, i. e. I am loving, for I love. In the *Poconchi* tongue, ſpoken in ſome parts of *Honduras*, the circumſtances of a diſcourſe doth generally diſtinguiſh the preſent from the future. *Gage's ſurvey of the Weſt Indies.*

event, which is either mentioned or referred to, took place; as *when Peter entered I was writing, ſcribebam.* The writing was paſt when it was ſpoken of, but preſent when Peter entered. This is called the *Imperfect tenſe:* or it may be ſpoken of as paſt in general, without giving any intimation when it was preſent, as *ſcripſi epiſtolam, I have written a letter,* which may have been in any period of time paſt extending to the preſent. This is called the *Preterperfect tenſe;* or laſtly it may be mentioned not only as paſt at the time when it is ſpoken of, but as alſo paſt when another event, referred to in the ſentence, was paſt; as *when Peter entered I had writen a letter, ſcripſeram.* Which expreſſes, that the letter was written both when it was ſpoken of, and alſo when Peter entered

tered. This is called the *Preterpluperfect tenſe.* (a)

We ſpeak of a thing to come as future indefinitely with reſpect to the time of mentioning it, as *ſcribam, I ſhall write*; or, though future with reſpect to the time of ſpeaking of it, yet as paſt with relation to ſome other event; as *when Peter ſhall enter I ſhall have written, ſcripſero.* The action is ſaid to be future to the time of ſpeaking of it, but as

(a) In *Welch* the infinitive mood is made to ſupply the place of the *preter-pluperfect tenſe* of the ſubjunctive mood, the prepoſition *wedi*, after, being placed before the nominative caſe; as *wedi ir gwr lefaru, after to the man ſpeak*; or more exactly in Greek,

; inſtead of *after the man had ſpoken.*

paſt with reſpect to Peter's entering. (a)

The Greeks make more diſtinctions of time, both paſt and future, one of their *futures* is called the *Paulopoſtfuturum*, as being generally ſuppoſed to expreſs an event which is about to happen very ſoon: it hath a paſſive ſignification; as *juſt going to be beaten.* (b)

I

(a) The *Welch* have no determinate future indicative: to ſupply it, they have recourſe to a periphraſis, in which the infinitive mood is introduced; as *mi a fyddaf yn ys grifennu;* which, rendered literally, is *I ſhall be in to write;* inſtead of *I ſhall write:* or as in *Greek*, we ſhould ſay
inſtead of

(b) It is remarkable that in the *Hebrew* and *Arabic* tongues the two only tenſes they have, viz. the *preterite* and *future* are each convertible into the other; and ſometimes into the preſent, by prefixing certain particles; which, however, do not belong to the verb, but have a ſeparate

I am very far from aſſerting that the foregoing account of the diſtinction of moods and tenſes will be found to correſpond with every uſe that is made of them; much leſs, that every perſon who hath written in any language hath conformed to it. As languages were not made by Philoſophers, but ſuggeſted by the neceſſities of beings in their firſt uncultivated ſtate, and enlarg-

ſignification. In the *Hebrew* ו, which ſignifies *and*, prefixed to the preter, makes it have the ſenſe of the future; ſometimes of the preſent: and the ſame ו, prefixed to the future, always changes its ſignification, generally into the preter, but ſometimes into the preſent. E. G. is *I viſited*; *and I will viſit*; is *he will ſay*; *and he ſaid*.

In *Arabic* the future hath the ſenſe of the preterite when *am not*; or *ama not yet* are prefixed to it: moreover, according to other particles prefixed, either of the tenſes may have the ſenſe of the preſent, preterite, future, optative, or ſubjunctive.

ed as their further occaſions prompted and required; it is in vain to expect that the laws and rules of them ſhould be either perfectly natural, or conſiſtent. All that was neceſſary in lectures upon *Univerſal Grammar* was to give ſuch a deſcription of any particular mode of ſpeech as will agree with the general practice of thoſe who uſed it, without taking notice of thoſe deviations which fall within the province of particular Grammarians.

It were to be wiſhed, indeed, for the eaſe of underſtanding and uſing a language, particularly a dead one, that the principles of it were more uniform; but this is an advantage which no language can boaſt. Neither the *Greeks*, nor *Latins* have, in all reſpects, preſerved a perfect diſtinction among their moods and tenſes: for, define theſe terms as we will, and lay down what

rules

rules we pleaſe with reſpect to them, we ſhall find exceptions to them in the beſt and pureſt claſſics.

Only the moſt perfect intelligence, who can ſee the whole at one view, can eſtabliſh laws that have no exceptions. The works of nature, indeed, we have reaſon to believe, are throughout uniform; and in analyzing the works of nature, in which ſo much uniformity hath been actually obſerved, it may be uſeful to have a view to the moſt ſimple and uniform laws; as thoſe, from paſt experience, will have ſtrong preſumptions in their favour: but this clue will by no means ſerve our purpoſe in explaining what hath been the invention of men, and particularly of rude uncultivated men. We muſt conſider their circumſtances, make the beſt we can of a lame and imperfect ſubject, and not deny real defects

and

and redundancies, or fruitleſsly labour to reconcile manifeſt inconſiſtencies, but muſt ourſelves conform to eſtabliſhed vicious practices, if we would not make ourſelves juſtly ridiculous by our ſingularity.

The CONJUGATIONS of verbs like the declenſions of nouns are not modifications that are founded on the nature of things, but merely on the caſual form of the words in particular languages; according to which the principal tenſes in all moods conform to a particular analogy. Thus *amo I love*, in Latin, is ſaid to be of the *firſt conjugation*; having its radical tenſes, *amo, amavi, amatum, amare*; and *moneo, I adviſe*, of the *ſecond*; having its radical tenſes, *moneo monui, monitum, monere*. The formation of theſe radical tenſes are very irregular: but the rules for the formation of other tenſes from theſe admit of very few exceptions.

Thus

Thus the *Pluſquamperfectum* is formed univerſally from the *perfect* by changing (i) into (eram) as amavi, amaveram. *(a)*

In

(a) In *Arabick* Grammars we find thirteen conjugations, nine of thoſe which have three radicals in the third perſon preterite (which is always the root from which all inflexions are ſuppoſed to be made in all the *Eaſtern* tongues of that genus, or family as we may call it) and four of thoſe which have four radicals: and in *Hebrew* there are ſeven conjugations. But what the Grammarians of the *Arabick* and *Hebrew* tongues call *conjugations*, are not ſo properly conjugations, in the ſenſe in which other Grammarians uſe that term, as *moods*; becauſe the ſame verb may admit of all the conjugations: but as each of theſe is further modified into the indicative, imperative, and infinitive moods, the Grammarians, not chuſing to call theſe *moods of moods*, thought proper to call the one conjugations, and the other moods. Beſides, both in *Hebrew* and *Arabick*, what, in other languages, is called the *paſſive voice* is found among the conjugations. Strictly ſpeaking, Grammarians of theſe languages make but one conjugation of them, and all verbs, that do not conform to the common manner of inflection are promiſcuouſly

In *Hebrew*, and other eaſtern languages, verbs are inflected according to *gender* as well as nouns: thus is *thou man didſt viſit*, and is *thou woman diaſt viſit*. They alſo admit of compariſon, or at leaſt what may be called exaggeration; as *He broke*, *he broke to pieces*. They have likewiſe a particular modification of the verb, to expreſs one perſon's cauſing another to do a thing; as from *he reigned* *he made to reign*, and another when the action of the verb is reciprocal, or reverts upon the ſubject of it, as from *he was holy*. *he made himſelf holy*, or *he pretended to be holy*.

Very

called *irregulars*; whereas the ſeveral kinds of theſe might have been called conjugations.

The *Arabians*, among other conjugations, have one to expreſs *co-operation*, expreſſed in *Latin* by the prepoſition *con* prefixed to the verb: another ſignifies *petition* and *confeſſion*.

Very few of theſe modifications of verbs are uſed in modern *European* languages, and particularly in *Engliſh*, but we ſupply this defect of modifications by auxiliary verbs; as *to be*, *to have*, *will*, *ſhall*, *can*, *muſt*, &c. as *I will write*, for *ſcribam*. (a) It is apparent, from this example, that the affirmation, with all the circumſtances attending it, is transferred from what is uſually called the *principal verb* to the auxiliary, leaving the word which, in other languages, implies both the affirmation and circumſtances, nothing more than the indefinite idea of the action, condition, or ſtate which is affirmed

(a) Nevertheleſs, in all the dialects of the *Teutonic*, the participle of the preterite is formed by prefixing an augment (ge) like that of the *Greeks* before the word; as in the preſent *German*, *Ich hab gehabt*, I have had. In the *Saxon* tongue this was afterwards changed into *y*, which was common even in *Engliſh* in *Chaucer*'s time; as *ycleapt*.

affirmed of the ſubject: in ſhort a mere participle: in modern languages they, accordingly, remain unchanged, and all the modifications peculiar to the verb take place in the auxiliary. *(a)*

• Which is abſolutely the moſt commodious expreſſion

(a) But the *Malayan* tongue, which is of great extent, and in great eſteem in the *Eaſt-Indies*, far exceeds our northern *European* tongues in ſimplicity: for, in that language, the verb itſelf admits of no modification whatever, on account either of perſon, tenſe, or voice: in all theſe reſpects the perſonal pronouns only, with particles prefixed, determine the ſenſe. E. G. *poekol* ſignifies *to beat*. In the perfect tenſe they ſay *beta ſoedda poekol*, I have beaten. In the future *beta adda poekol*, I ſhall beat. In the paſſive voice *ſjadi poekol* is to be beaten.

The *Braſilian* tongue hath only two modifications of verbs, of which one is *poſitive*, and the other *negative*; as *aincu*, I kill; *namcai*, I do not kill. *Reland ubi ſupra.*

expreſſion of affirmations and their circumſtances is not very eaſy to determine. I think, however, it may be ſaid, in favour of the modern method, that we can expreſs all the ideas included in, or connected with an affirmation, with more preciſion, and almoſt as few additional ſyllables as the *Greeks* or *Latins*. And ſome very important circumſtances of an affirmation are expreſſed in *Engliſh*, particularly, with the utmoſt conciſeneſs and preciſion, for which in thoſe languages we muſt have recourſe to very long ~~praiphraſes~~ periphrases. For a proof of this let any perſon endeavour to expreſs in *Latin* the difference between, *I ſhall* and *I will write*; *I may*, and *I can write*.

The diſtinction that ſome Grammarians make of verbs into *perſonal* and *impersonal* hath no foundation in reaſon; for every affirmation muſt neceſſarily imply ſome ſub-

ject of which it is affirmed: Thus *pluit*, which we render *it rains*, ſupplying the elipſis is *cælum* or *aer pluit*.

LECTURE the NINTH.

OF

ADVERBS, &c.

IRREGULARITIES

AND

DIALECTS.

OF ADVERBS it hath been obſerved, that they are chiefly *contractions for other words*, and ſometimes for whole ſentences. (a) This is very evident with re-

 ſpect

(a) Mr. *Harris* calls *Adverbs*, *Attributives of Attributives*; that is of *verbs*, or *adjectives*; as if they always attended thoſe parts of ſpeech, and modified their ſignification. But they are only

ſpect to the three principal Claſſes of them, namely thoſe of *time*, *place* and *quality* or *manner*: for inſtance, *nunc* may be rendered by *hoc tempore*; *hic*, by *hoc loco*; and *ſic*, by *hoc modo*. The affirmation *yes* ſerves inſtead of repeating a whole ſentence, with its ſubject, affirmation, and every thing belonging to it: *non*, *not* is the ſame as *nego*, or

thoſe of *quality* or *manner* which can, without great force, be comprehended in the definition; and many words muſt be excluded which have ſo long, and ſo univerſally been called *adverbs*, that it is making too free with words and their eſtabliſhed acceptation not to include them in it. For inſtance, by what conſtruction can, *ſurſum hujuſque*, *ſemel*, *cur*, and many others be called the attributes of verbs. If nothing more be meant by the definition, than that adverbs are words which ſerve to aſcertain and fix an affirmation, every word in the ſentence is an adverb; at leaſt all the words into which adverbs may be reſolved, which are both ſubſtantives, adjectives, and even verbs themſelves.

or ſerves inſtead of repeating the ſubject and affirmation of a ſentence with contrary attributes. (*a*)

Adverbs of quality or manner admit of compariſon for the ſame reaſon that their correſpondent adjectives do: for as *ſapiens*, *wiſe*, may be varied into *ſapientior*, *wiſer*, *ſapientiſſimus*, *wiſeſt*; ſo may *ſapienter*, *wiſely*

(*a*) Notwithſtanding a prepoſition be ſufficiently known to be affirmative by the abſence of the negative particles, the *Welch* language hath a particle [*a*] appropriated to ſignify an affirmation; as, *mi a garaf*, *I love*.

In ſeveral languages a double negative often only ſerves to encreaſe the force of a ſingle one as in Greek

let no one

it is not poſſible. In *Saxon*, *ne om ic na Chriſt*, I am not the Chriſt. In *French Je ne parle pas*, I do not ſpeak. In *Engliſh* and *Latin* the ſecond negative deſtroys the firſt, and makes the ſentence affirmative; as *non poſſum non meminiſſe*, I cannot forget.

wiſely, become *ſapientius*, *more wiſely*, and *ſapientiſſime*, *moſt wiſely*. Though it is not every language which admits of the compariſon of adjectives that alſo admits of the compariſon of adverbs.

Adverbs, being contractions for other words, ſuch words have, in ſome languages, been made adverbs as had much better have been left in the claſs to which their ſignification gave them a claim; as *utinam*, *I wiſh*, which is a verb: likewiſe *eja*, *age*, *agedum*, *come on*; *heu*, *eheu*, *ehodum*, *come hither*: and *en*, *eccus*, *eccum*, *behold him*, and ſeveral others.

PREPOSITIONS are words which, in all languages, have been invented to expreſs the relation or ſituation of one word to another; for the caſes of nouns can expreſs but a few of thoſe relations. Almoſt all prepoſitions, in

in their original acceptation, relate to *local poſition;* as *with, at, from, without* &c. the beſt method, therefore, of aſcertaining their proper uſe in conſtruction, and when applied by analogy, to things that are not ſenſible, but intellectual, moral, &c. is to attend to the figure, and conſider what prepoſition would beſt expreſs the relation, as of ſenſible things to ſenſible things: thus a paraphraſe *on* the ſcriptures is proper, becauſe in the latent figure, the one is conceived to lie or reſt as it were upon the other.

Prepoſitions admit of no inflections in any language, unleſs ſome of them may be ſaid to be compared; though, in that caſe, they are conſidered as *adjectives:* as *near him, nearer him;* becauſe it may be ſaid that in this caſe another prepoſition to is underſtood;

as

as *near to him, nearer to him.* (a)

Of CONJUNCTIONS more will be ſaid when I treat of the *conſtruction of ſentences*, I only obſerve, in this place, that they may be claſſed into as many diviſions and ſub-diviſions as there are different manners in which we can paſs from one ſentence to another, which are as numerous as the relations which one ſentence may ſtand in to another. Thus ſome are termed *copulative*, as *and;* and ſome *disjunctive*, as *or; illative*, as *therefore; exceptive*, as *unleſs*, &c. the meaning of which the names themſelves (which

(a) *Prepoſitions*, in moſt languages, precede their ſubſtantives; but ſometimes they follow them, and are even affixed to them in Latin; as *genuum tenus;* up to the knees; *mecum*, with me. In the *Braſilian* tongue prepoſitions always take the form of affixes; as *cou*, upon; *itacou*, upon a ſtone. *Reland de linguis Americanis.*

(which may be found in almoſt every grammar of every language) ſufficiently expreſs. (a)

Except the ſimple conjunctives, and diſjunctives *and, or, either,* &c. and *as* and *than* which are terms of compariſon; all the other conjunctions, as they ſhew the dependance that one ſentence hath upon another, expreſs ſome modification of the relation of cauſe and effect; as will appear by conſidering any of them ſeparately: let the trial be made with the principal of them, ſuch as *if, but although, becauſe, therefore, that,* &c.

INTER-

(a) I ſay that conjunctions connect ſentences: for though they be ſometimes placed between two ſingle words, they ſerve to contract and unite different ſentences; as *Brutus and Caſſius fought* may be reſolved into *Brutus fought,* and *Caſſius fought.*

INTERJECTIONS paſs into words of the other claſſes, by the ſame gradations by which inarticulate ſounds paſs into articulate. Thus though ſome words be evidently inarticulate expreſſions of ſudden paſſions and emotions, as *ha ha he*, in laughing, and convey no particular idea; others, which have, notwithſtanding, been called interjections, are in part articulate, and others are wholly ſo: as *væ* an expreſſion of ſorrow; *papæ* of admiration; *euge* of encouragement: ſome of which, as they may be rendered by either words, ought rather to be called *Adverbs*.

Beſides the words reduced to the above-mentioned claſſes, which have each a diſtinct meaning, or joint value in a diſcourſe, Grammarians enumerate others, which they call *Expletives*, as adding nothing to the ſenſe where they are introduced, but ſerving only

only to improve the ſound; as ἄν and others in *Greek*. They ſeem, however, to add ſomething to the emphaſis, though it be ſmall. It is very common for words, and particularly verbs, in *Latin*, *Greek*, and *Hebrew*, to receive a ſuperfluous termination for the ſake of ſound: for inſtance *mutarier*, for (*mutair*); alſo a [t] inſerted (*mutari*) between two *French* words is of no other uſe than to prevent the concurrence of two vowels; as *a-t-il*, *hath he*. For a like reaſon, it is uſual with writers in all languages to ſhorten words upon occaſion, both at the beginning, the middle, and the end; but to make much uſe of theſe orthographical figures, or licences, in any language, is not admired.

The inflexions of words are not preciſely the ſame in words of the ſame claſſes; but, in all languages, are ſubject to very conſiderable

derable *irregularities*. Theſe irregularities chiefly affect words of the moſt frequent occurrence, which are alſo generally ſhort, and ſoon pronounced; as *ſum, I am; fui, I have been.* Moreover, inſtead of a ſimple inflexion, it frequently happens that quite other words are introduced, to expreſs the different modifications; as *bonus good; melior better; optimus beſt,* &c.

Theſe facts, if attended to, will lead us to the ſource of theſe irregularities. Words of neceſſary and frequent occurrence muſt have been peculiarly liable to be pronounced with great variation, by different perſons, and in different parts of a country. It would alſo frequently happen that perſons would hit upon quite different words to expreſs the ſame idea. And when, in conſequence of a perfect communication between all the parts of a country, thoſe forms

forms of ſpeech would grow eſtabliſhed which had the moſt, and the moſt powerful advocates; in this caſe, it could not but happen ſometimes, that the inflections of different words of the ſame meaning would be intermixed, and produce what we now call an irregular inflection. To give an inſtance of this: the verb *ſum* was uſed for the verb ſubſtantive in ſome parts of *Italy*, and the verb *fuo* in others: when all that ſpoke the language had a perfect communication, and it became neceſſary to adopt one form, it happened that the verb *ſum* was retained in the preſent tenſe; but *fui* (from *fuo*) in the perfect; and *fuo* in the preſent became obſolete. *(a)*

(a) Thus in *Greek* he bought, but never I bought, inſtead of which they uſed

This might alſo be a ſource of many defective words: ſince, though they might originally be uſed in all tenſes, moods, and perſons; yet there being alſo other words, of the ſame ſignification, in uſe in different parts of a country; one verb might be preferred in one tenſe, mood, or perſon, and another in another. *(a)* For the ſame reaſon, many *nouns* alſo are now of different genders, in different numbers, and even in the ſame number; and have ſome caſes formed according to one declenſion, and others according to another, and ſometimes according to ſeveral; with every other ſpecies of *Heteroclify* that can be imagined.

Genders

(a) Meurſius in his Comments on *Helladius* an ancient Grammarian, gives many inſtances in which the *Greeks* made uſe of ſome certain tenſes of verbs without ever uſing the other tenſes and often the third perſon without the others.

Genders and inflections being perfectly arbitrary, there could not be any univerſally ſatisfactory reaſon why one mere cuſtom ſhould not take place as well as another, which had no better foundation in nature.

When a language was ſpoken by ſeveral independant cities or ſtates, that had no very free communication with one another, and before the uſe of letters was ſo generally diffuſed as to fix the modes of it, it was impoſſible, not only to prevent the ſame words being pronounced with different tones of voice (like the *Engliſh* and *Scotch* pronunciation) but even the number and nature of the ſyllables would be greatly altered when the original root remained the ſame; and even quite different words would be introduced in different places. And when, upon the introduction of letters, men endeavoured to expreſs their ſounds in writing, they

would, of courſe, write their words with the ſame varieties in letters. Theſe different modes of ſpeaking and writing a language originally the ſame have obtained the name of DIALECTS, and are moſt of all conſpicuous in the *Greek* tongue, thus *I* was, by the *Attics*, frequently pronounced ; by the *Dorians* and ; and by the *Boetians* and .

All theſe different modes of ſpeaking, like all other modes, might have grown into diſrepute, and, by degrees out of uſe, giving place to one as a ſtandard, had particular circumſtances contributed to recommend and enforce it; but, in *Greece*, every ſeperate community looking upon itſelf as in no reſpect inferior to its neighbours in point of antiquity, dignity, intelligence, or any other qualification; and being conſtantly rivals

vals for power, wealth, and influence, would no more ſubmit to receive the laws of language from another than the laws of government: rather, upon the introduction of letters and learning, they would vye with each other in embelliſhing and recommending their own dialects, and thereby perpetuate thoſe different modes of ſpeech.

On the other hand, in a country where all that ſpoke the language had one head, all writers, ambitious to draw the attention of the leading men in the ſtate, would ſtudiouſly throw aſide the particular forms of ſpeaking they might happen to have been brought up in, and conform to that of their ſuperiors: by this means Dialects, though uſed in converſation, would hardly ever be introduced into writing; and the written language would be capable of being reduced very nearly to a perfect uniformity.

For this reaſon the language of *Greece*, though ſpoken at firſt within a very ſmall extent of country, yet by a number of independent cities, had no common ſtandard; and books now extant in it differ ſo widely in their forms of expreſſion; that the moſt accurate ſkill in ſome of them will not enable a man thoroughly to underſtand others. Let any perſon after reading *Homer* or *Heſiod* take up *Theocritus*. Whereas, in the *Latin* tongue, though written in very diſtant parts of the vaſt *Roman* empire, Dialects are unknown. However differently *Romans* might ſpeak, there are no more differences in their writings than the different genius, abilities, and views of different men will always occaſion. The *Patavinity* of Livy is not to be perceived.

When a language had been ſpoken by different nations a conſiderable time before the

the introduction of letters and learning, the variations in the forms of ſpeech would grow too conſiderable to form only different dialects of the ſame language; when reduced to writing they would form what are called *ſiſter-languages*, analogous in their ſtructure, and having many words in common. Thus the *Hebrew* and *Chaldaic* or *Syriac* with perhaps other eaſtern languages, might have been originally the ſame. On the other hand, the *Engliſh* and *Scotch*, had the kingdoms continued ſeparate, might have been diſtinct languages, having two different ſtandards of writing.

LECTURE

LECTURE the TENTH.

OF DERIVATION AND SYNTAX.

IN a manner analogous to the various inflections of words of the ſame claſs, whereby the idea that any of them repreſent is differently circumſtanced, and yet the word remains a *ſubſtantive*, *adjective*, *verb*, &c. as before, are the ideas themſelves, as it

it were, inflected; ſo as to take the form of different parts of ſpeech, and yet retain the ſame meaning and original ſignification in them all. Rather it may be called the *Tranſmutation* of words: for, as in the feigned tranſmutation of metals, the matter, the ſubſtance, of the metal is ſuppoſed to remain the ſame, though the external ſenſible properties, whereby it was denominated this or that particular metal, be changed: In like manner, though, in this caſe, an idea appear now in the form of a ſubſtantive, then of an adjective, again a verb, or an adverb, it is in reality the ſame idea ſtill: only differently modified, and having different external properties. To inſtance in the word *homo*, a *man*: the ſame idea conſtitutes the adjective *humanus*, *belonging to a man*; and the adverb *humaniter*, *like a man*.

Participles,

Participles, and particular prepoſitions, alſo, prefixed or affixed to words, do greatly diverſify the meaning of them, and, in a very eaſy, and commodious manner, enlarge and enrich a language; as from *humanus*, *humane* comes *inhumanus*, *inhuman*; and from the Engliſh word *hope* comes *hopeful*, and *hopeleſs*. As theſe ſeveral prefixes and affixes have a fixed and determinate meaning, at the ſame time that the uſe of them greatly enlargeth a language, it adds nothing to the difficulty of learning and uſing it; for the meaning of the compound word is eaſily deduced from the known parts of which it conſiſts.

Moreover, not only are words that have a meaning joined to particles that have no meaning in themſelves, but alſo to other words that have a diſtinct and ſeparate ſignification; as , *vainglorious*;

ous; which words, in their reſpective languages, are formed by the union of two other words, which have ſeparately a diſtinct ſignification, and which they retain in conjunction.

From theſe various compoſitions of words is derived the chief copia and power of the *Greek* language: for the *Greek primitives* do not exceed thoſe of other languages in number, and hence the comparative poverty of the *Hebrew* and ſome other *Eaſtern tongues* of a like ſimple ſtructure. It is obſervable of thoſe languages that do not eaſily admit of ſuch compoſitions of words, that if they do, notwithſtanding, in a courſe of time, acquire a large ſtock, it is at the expence of making them infinitely difficult to the learner. The *Arabic*, with no more words than the *Greek*, is ſaid to have prodigiouſly more roots, and the difficulty of learning

learning a language depends chiefly upon the number of its original roots: for when they are once learned, and the method of combining them become familiar, the combinations themſelves give the learner but little trouble; as when a perſon is perfect in the alphabet of a language he ſoon learns to read it.

This combination of words and the uſes of it may be likewiſe illuſtrated by the doctrine of ſimple and compound ideas in the human mind. Our ſimple ideas are few, and the chief furniture of an improved mind muſt conſiſt of compound ideas, formed by the various combinations of ſimple ones. In like manner, the copia of a well formed language conſiſts of compound words, formed by the combinations of ſimple roots.

Of

Of SYNTAX.

HAVING, in the preceding lectures, conſidered the principal affections of ſingle words, I come now to treat of ſentences; which is the ſubject of that part of Grammar which is uſually called SYNTAX.

A *ſentence* is either ſingle, or compound; and a period conſiſts, either of one ſentence, or a combination of ſentences, joined by particles expreſſing the relation that each ſentence hath to the ſucceeding.

A ſingle ſentence conſiſts of a ſingle affirmation, or a ſubject and attribute, joined by a verb; as *God is inviſible.* In this ſentence, *God* is the *ſubject* of the affirmation, and *inviſible* is the *attribute,* or that

which is affirmed of the ſubject, the verb *is* ſerving to expreſs the affirmation.

In a compound ſentence, the ſubject or attribute, or both, are made complex terms, capable of being themſelves reſolved into diſtinct ſingle ſentences, or even into leſs compound ſentences. This ſentence *God who is inviſible made the world which is viſible* is compound, both the ſubject and attribute containing, each of them, diſtinct affirmations; the former, that *God is inviſible*, and the latter, that *the world is viſible*.

Here, likewiſe, is apparent the principal uſe of the relative *who* or *which;* namely, that the ſentence to which it belongs doth not contain the principal affirmation, but one that is either introductory, or ſubſequent to it: that is, the relative ſerves as a common *link* or *vinculum* to join what may be called

called *incidental* affirmations to the principal one, in order to make a compound ſentence. If I ſay *God is inviſible*, the ſenſe is complete, nothing further is expected; but if I ſay *God who is inviſible*, though the words contain a real affirmation; yet it is ſo circumſtanced, by means of the relative *who*, that the mind is in ſuſpenſe, waiting for another, and the principal affirmation, or ſomething to affirm concerning God, who is inviſible.

There is no neceſſity, however, for expreſſing the introductory and ſubſequent affirmations directly; ſince the ſtructure of moſt languages will admit of the relative being ſuppreſſed and implied. For the ſentence is equally intelligible whether I ſay, *God who is inviſible made the world which is viſible*; or *the inviſible God made the viſible world*. The only difference is, that,

in the former caſe, the incidental affirmation is more particularly pointed out, to draw the attention the more, and hath the greater emphaſis; whereas, in the latter, though the ſame aſſertion be expreſſed, it is in a more ſlight and ſuperficial manner.

By the ſame ſteps, the ſubject or attribute of a propoſition may be made ſtill more complex at pleaſure, and yet be but one compound ſentence; as every relative and its verb, either expreſſed or underſtood, ſtill points forward or backward to one principal affirmation. Thus the following is but one ſentence. *The all-wiſe, almighty, and infinitely good, but inviſible God made the viſible world, with all its furniture and inhabitants; conſiſting of land, and water, mountains, rivers, trees, men, birds, beaſts, fiſhes, and innumerable other things, which diſplay his perfections.* For all the terms that are annexed

annexed to the ſubject and predicate only make thoſe two ideas the more complex, by a diſtinct enumeration of their properties.

Or, though the additional words in a ſentence expreſs a circumſtance of the affirmation, and be not a deſcription either of the ſubject or attribute, the ſentence is ſtill but ſingle; as *Solomon decided concerning the dead child very wiſely:* in this place *wiſely*, in whatever part of the ſentence it be inſerted, expreſſes a circumſtance of the affirmation; implying that Solomon not only decided, but decided wiſely, or with wiſdom; the adverb, as obſerved above, being a contraction for that periphraſis.

In any other caſe, where diſtinct affirmations are made, and the relative with its verb is neither expreſſed nor underſtood, the whole is not one compound ſentence, but

a combination of ſentences; and if no pauſe be made in the diſcourſe between them, a conjunction, expreſſing their relation to one another, is either expreſſed or underſtood; as *I will write, unleſs you prevent me*: Here are two affirmations, *I will write*, and *you will prevent me*. And, it being impoſſible to inſert the relative with its verb between them, they muſt be conſidered as diſtinct ſentences, the conjunction *unleſs* ſhowing what relation they ſtand in to one another: in this place, it implies, that the two affirmations are of ſuch a nature, that if the latter take place, the former cannot.

Any number of theſe ſentences, ſimple or compound, make a *period;* and any number of periods, a *paragraph*. The relation which periods, and even paragraphs, have to one another is expreſſed by the ſame conjunctive particles which ſerve to connect the

the members of compound ſentences; though, for the greater clearneſs and perſpicuity of compoſition, it is preferable (eſpecially in argumentation) after a complete paragraph, to ſhow the relation of the next paragraph by a ſentence appropriated to that purpoſe. For inſtance if, in the laſt mentioned example, inſtead of a thing which is ſo ſoon expreſſed as the writing of a letter, a number of things of conſequence, which required a larger explication and detail of particulars, had been propoſed; and, inſtead of a ſimple prohibition, other ſchemes, which required to be mentioned diſtinctly were in danger of interfering with the former, a judicious compoſer would not, in this caſe, chuſe to connect theſe two details with the ſimple conjunctive particle *unleſs*; but in a much larger and more explicite manner: as *but before theſe ſchemes can be put in execution, it muſt be conſider-*

ed

ed how far they may interfere with others, of no leſs importance; or ſome other introduction to the ſame purpoſe.

It is in theſe forms of tranſition from ſentence to ſentence, and paragraph to paragraph, or the connexion of the different ſentences and parts of a diſcourſe, that the chief difficulty of compoſition, in point of elegance, conſiſts. Some connect the materials of their compoſitions in a more obvious and direct, others in a more concealed and indirect manner; ſome enlarge upon the relations of the ſeveral parts, and thereby make their diſcourſe more diffuſe; others in a manner ſuppreſs the connecting particles, and by that means are conciſe; and it requires judgment to determine when the one method, and when the other is preferable.

But this can no more be taught by writ-

ten

ten rules, except in a groſs general manner, than the art of graceful motion, or dancing, can be taught by written rules. Both are habits, which can only be acquired and perfected by obſervation, and repeated trials. A graceful motion may be perceived, and pointed out when it is ſeen; but to deſcribe a *priori*, or before hand in what it muſt conſiſt, were impoſſible. In like manner, the beſt and moſt graceful tranſitions muſt be learned from the obſervation of the practice of the beſt writers, and can be learned no way elſe.

LECTURE

LECTURE the ELEVENTH.

OF THE CONCATENATION OF SENTENCES AND TRANSPOSITION OF WORDS.

THE concatenation of ſentences, may ſupply us with a pretty good teſt of the ſimplicity or refinement of languages. It is very late before children learn the uſe

uſe of connecting particles in ſentences; and perſons muſt have ſeen read, and converſed, if not have written a good deal, before they be ready and accurate in the uſe of a conſiderable variety of them.

Now the method of learning and uſing a language that is formed muſt be analogous to the method of its formation at firſt. Short and unconnected ſentences would be ſufficient for the moſt preſſing and neceſſary occaſions of human life, of men acquainted but with a few objects, and only the moſt obvious qualities of thoſe objects: As human life improved, as men became acquainted with a greater variety and multiplicity of objects, and new relations were perceived to ſubſiſt among them, they would find themſelves under a neceſſity of inventing new terms to expreſs them. As their growing experience and obſervation would furniſh them

them with a greater ſtock of ideas to communicate, and ſubjects to conſult and converſe about, their endeavours to expreſs their new conceptions of things would lead them, by degrees, and after repeated trials, into every requiſite form of tranſition, for the purpoſe of connected diſcourſe, either of the hiſtorical, or augmentative kind.

But, as we find that perſons who have not learned to read and write are in a great meaſure incapable of a connected diſcourſe, and even perſons who are accuſtomed to read and converſe with eaſe are ſeldom able, at firſt, to put their thoughts together in writing with tolerable propriety; it is not eaſy to conceive, that the language of any people, before the introduction of letters, could be otherwiſe than very incoherent and unconnected: and that their firſt attempts to write would want that variety, accuracy and

elegance

elegance of contexture, which their late compoſitions would acquire.

Hence the ſtriking ſimplicity of ſtyle in the books of the *old teſtament;* perhaps the moſt ancient writings in the world. The hiſtory of *Moſes* how different from that of *Livy*, and *Thucidides;* or even of *Cæſar*, *Salluſt*, and *Zenophon*. The moral diſcourſes of *Solomon*, how different from thoſe of *Plato*, *Cicero* and *Seneca*: for though much time had elapſed from *Moſes* to *Solomon;* yet the *Hebrew* nation, not having been addicted to letters in that interval, their language had received little or no improvement.

Even the writers of the *new teſtament*, having been chiefly converſant with the ancient *Jewiſh* writers, and their education having given them no leiſure to attend to

the refinements of ſtyle, have generally adopted the ſimple unconnected ſtyle of their forefathers, both in their narration and reaſoning. I ſhall give one inſtance of this. *John the evangeliſt* is giving an account of a converſation that paſſed between *John the baptiſt*, and the *Jews*; inſtead of carrying on the narration in his own perſon, as an hiſtorian, and giving the queſtions and anſwers ſuch a form as was proper to make them incorporate with his own account of them (a turn quite familiar to other writers) he reports the words juſt as they were ſpoken, notwithſtanding the ſpeeches were too ſhort to make it in the leaſt neceſſary or expedient to ſet down the whole by way of formal dialogue.

John I. 19. *And this is the record of John, when the* JEWS *ſent prieſts and Levites from* JERUSALEM *to aſk him Who art*

art thou? And he confeſſed, and denied not; but confeſſed, I am not the Chriſt. And they aſked him, What then art thou? Elias? and he ſaid I am not. Art thou the prophet? and he anſwered no.

This converſation a writer uſed to compoſition would rather have related in a more connected manner, as follows. *Then the Jews ſent prieſts and Levites from Jeruſalem to aſk him who he was, and he confeſſed he was not the Chriſt: They aſked him if he was Elias, but he ſaid he was not, if he was that prophet, but he anſwered no.*

Upon theſe principles we may perhaps be able to give a more complete ſolution than hath hitherto been given of a paradox in the hiſtory of letters: viz. Why, generally, the firſt regular compoſitions of any

people ſhould be in *verſe*, rather than in *proſe*. One reaſon, no doubt, was that, antecedent to the uſe of letters, verſe was much more proper than proſe in compoſitions that were deſigned to perpetuate the memory of remarkable tranſactions and events, as deviations from the original would be made with more difficulty, and corrupted paſſages reſtored with more eaſe: But, additional to this, we may perhaps affirm with truth, that the concatenation of ſentences is not ſo intricate in verſe, as in proſe. Not unfrequently the neglect of regular tranſitions is eſteemed graceful in verſe and the old poems here referred to, as the *Delphin Oracles*, &c. where the ſenſe was generally compleated in a line, or a ſhort ſtanza, required very little art or variety of connexion. How much more elaborate in point of tranſition and concatenation of ſentences is even the hiſtory

hiſtory of *Herodotus* than the poems of *Homer*, many parts of which are hiſtorical.

Another thing which *Grammarians* and writers attend to in ſentences is the order of the words of which they conſiſt. Of this ſome languages admit of a much greater variety than others, owing to a difference in their original ſtructure. When the relations of words to words are expreſſed by terminations, it is a matter of indifference, with reſpect to the ſenſe, in what order the words ſtand. Whereas in languages that do not denote the relations of words to one another by terminations, but do it in ſome meaſure by their place, the order of words is neceſſarily limited and invariable. I ſhall ſubjoin an example.

Alexander vicit Darium, Alexander conquered Darius. Tranſpoſe the *Latin*

words in every manner poſſible, the ſenſe is in no danger of being miſtaken; but change the order of the words in the *Engliſh* tranſlation, and the ſenſe is either rendered ambiguous, or is abſolutely contradictory.

Notwithſtanding this reſtriction, *Modern* languages admit of a conſiderable liberty of tranſpoſition in other reſpects, in common with the *Antient;* for intire clauſes of a ſentence, which contain a whole circumſtance of the affirmation, may be tranſpoſed at pleaſure, without endangering the ſenſe or the perſpicuity: as if to the former ſentence he added the circumſtance of *three battles*, it is indifferent whether we ſay, *Alexander conquered Darius in three battles. In three battles Alexander conquered Darius*, or *Alexander in three battles conquered Darius.*

But not only ~~many~~ may a writer take the liberty to change the order of his words in a ſentence; but, in moſt languages, every complex ſentence is capable of a great variety of expreſſion, by little more than a different conſtruction of the ſame words; which contribute greatly to the eaſe and harmony of compoſition. I ſhall inſtance in the laſt mentioned ſentence the ſenſe of which may be expreſſed by ſaying either, that *Alexander conquered Darius*, or *Darius was conquered by Alexander*.

Further, by introducing other words of ſimilar ſignification, as the mention of minute and ſlight circumſtances, a ſentence admits of ſtill greater variety of expreſſion. Thus we may ſay, *Three battles were fought and Darius was at the mercy of Alexander. Alexander fought three battles before he ſubdued Darius*, &c. &c.

Languages

Languages that have a great copia of words are much preferable to others on this account; ſince, by a ſmall alteration of this kind, a writer may give what degree of emphaſis or preciſion he pleaſes to an expreſſion; in the command of which, the accuracy and excellency of ſtyle doth greatly conſiſt.

In all languages that admit of the inflexions of words, care muſt be taken, with reſpect to the ſyntax, that the terminations do properly correſpond. The rules reſpecting this are called rules of *concord*, and of *government*. Concord reſpects chiefly the agreement of the *ſubſtantive* with its *adjective*, when both are declined alike. In *Latin* and *Greek* it is neceſſary that they agree in number, caſe, and gender. For example *bonus puer* is good latin; but *bona*, *bonum*, *boni*, or *bono* puer are bad. In

Engliſh

Engliſh no care is neceſſary in this reſpect, ſince our adjectives have neither number, caſe, or gender: but *Engliſh* pronominal adjectives, which are in part declined, may, diſagree with their ſubſtantives: thus we muſt always write, *theſe books*, and not *this books*.

Government chiefly reſpects the putting the proper caſe after a verb: Thus, ſince, in Latin, verbs tranſitive regularly require an accuſative caſe after them, it is wrong to ſay *amo magiſtro*, and not *magiſtrum*.

The great variety there is in the conſtruction of languages, that admit of many inflexions of words, makes it difficult to learn, and eſpecially to uſe them.(a) The *Latin*

(a) In languages that do not abound with inflections, it is nevertheleſs remarkable how

Latin and *Greek* however, are not ſo irregular in their ſyntax as, at firſt ſight, they ſeem to be: ſince able Grammarians have ſhown that, by ſupplying ſuppoſed ellipſes, many of the moſt irregular conſtructions are perfectly analogous to the moſt uſual and ſimple ones, and have thereby reduced the original rules of ſyntax into a much ſmaller compaſs than could well have been imagined.

Thus, for example, they have ſhown that thoſe words which are commonly ſaid to govern a genitive, do it by means of another noun underſtood, to which it is the latter;

differently words, and particularly pronouns in conſtruction are placed. And how aukward the manner of one people would look, if it were adopted by another: for inſtance, if we would render into *French* this expreſſion. *I carry you ſome thither:* we muſt ſay, *Je vous y en porte;* which put in the ſame order in *Engliſh*, is *I you thither ſome carry.*

latter; and every ablative is governed by a prepoſition expreſſed or underſtood: for inſtance in this ſentence, *Eſt ſapientis*, the word *ſapientis* is not properly governed of the verb *eſt*, but is the latter of two nouns, of which *officium*, *ars*, or ſome word of the like import is the former: and accordingly, the proper Engliſh of it is. *It is the duty, or the part of a wiſe man.* In *fortior Alexandro, braver than Alexander*, *Alexandro* is governed by the prepoſition *præ*, which is ſuppreſſed. In like manner may moſt other irregular conſtructions be accounted for.

LECTURE

LECTURE the TWELFTH.

OF THE

REGULAR GROWTH

AND

CORRUPTION

OF

LANGUAGES.

LANGUAGES, like all other arts which owe their cultivation, if not their invention, to men, which ſubſiſt by their uſe of them, and are daily ſubject to human caprice, cannot be expected to continue long in the ſame ſtate: whether *ancient*,

ent, or *modern*; whether *ſimple*, or *complex* in their ſtructure, they have a kind of *regular growth*, *improvement*, and *declenſion*; and are moreover liable to many *intermediate fluctuations*. No internal conſtitution can preſerve them either from the general revolutions, or the particular accidents.

The regular growth of languages proceeds from the neceſſity of giving names to new objects, new ideas, and new combinations of ideas; combinations exiſting, either in nature, or formed in the imagination. Hence the language of thoſe nations hath ever grown copious whoſe ſituation and occaſions were ſuch as brought them acquainted with various ſcenes of nature, or obliged them to have recourſe to the improvements of art.

The private life and policy of the *Hebrews*, living under an abſolute monarchy,

and whoſe religion forbad them the uſe of the arts of painting and ſtatuary; and the immediate deſign of which was to keep them clear of all connection with neighbouring nations,(a) was too uniform to afford them many opportunities or occaſions of enlarging, or embelliſhing their language.

Whereas the *Greeks*, divided into a great number of ſeparate communities, perpetually vying with each other in power, policy, commerce, and arts; moſt of the ſtates republics, where all kind of honours and emoluments were the prize of eloquence; whoſe private policy abounded with ſuch inſtitutions as games, feſtivals, &c. which drew a vaſt concourſe of people together, and

(a) That was a means uſed to anſwer one great deſign of their conſtitution, viz. preſerving them from idolatry.

and where men diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their talents in publick ſpeaking; where not only publick conſultations were held for the general utility of *Greece*, but poems, and even hiſtories, were recited in publick, could not fail giving particular attention to their language. And *Athens*, whoſe conſtitution was a more perfect democracy, and in other reſpects afforded more ſcope for the uſe of language, and where the rewards of literary excellence were more certain, and more inviting, was deemed to be in a more eſpecial manner the ſeat of eloquence in Greece. The Athenians in general valued themſelves upon their exquiſite taſte for the purity and propriety of their language, and among them the arts of oratory were held in reputation, and flouriſhed long after polite literature was totally forgotten in every other part of Greece.

Next to the *Athenians*, the inhabitants of the ſea port towns of *Aſia minor*, addicted to commerce, ſubject to frequent revolutions, and peculiarly connected with Athens, diſtinguiſhed themſelves for their ſkill in the powers of language.

Univerſally, in countries where there were no arts to exerciſe the inventive faculties of men, and to augment and diverſify their ſtock of ideas, nor any other inducement to excel in the uſe of ſpeech, language hath been very barren; and, in every reſpect, ill adapted to expreſs the ideas of more cultivated minds. What the poems were that *Ovid* wrote in the *Getic* language we are not informed; but certain we may be, from the nature of things, that they muſt have fallen infinitely ſhort of his *Latin* compoſitions; if not in delicacy of ſentiment,

ſentiment, at leaſt in accuracy and eaſe of expreſſion.

The progreſs of human life in general is from poverty to riches, and from riches to luxury, and ruin: in *Architecture* ſtructures have always been at firſt heavy, and inconvenient, then uſeful and ornamental, and laſtly real propriety and magnificence have been loſt in ſuperfluous decorations. Our very *dreſs* is at firſt plain and aukward, then eaſy and elegant, and laſtly downright fantaſtical. Stages of a ſimilar nature may be obſerved in the progreſs of all human arts; and language, being liable to the ſame influences, hath undergone the ſame changes. Whenever a language hath emerged from its firſt rough ſtate of nature, and hath acquired a ſufficient copia of ſignificant and harmonious terms, arbitrary and whimſical ideas of excellence have been

ſuperadded to thoſe which were natural and becoming, till at length the latter have been intirely ſacrificed to the former.

I ſhall exemplify theſe obſervations by a ſhort hiſtory of the revolutions of the *Roman* language. About the time of the firſt *Punic* war, when the inſcription upon the *Columna Roſtra* was written, the Latin tongue ſeems to have been very barbarous, and void of that regularity and harmony which it was afterwards diſtinguiſhed by. In conſequence of more extenſive connections with foreign countries and ſtates, in conſequence of the Romans having more power, wealth, and influence to contend for among themſelves, and eſpecially upon the introduction of the Grecian arts and ſciences, all the chief men of the ſtate applied themſelves with indefatigable aſſiduity to the cultivation of their language, and

and in one age it arrived to all the perfection it ever attained.

In this ſtate it continued till the diſſolution of the commonwealth; after which time when little uſe was made of the Roſtrum, and judicial proceedings took a form which left little to the pleader: when, in ſhort, the practice of oratory did not bring along with it thoſe honours and advantages that had formerly attended it; in thoſe circumſtances, perſons addicted to letters having no occaſion for the ancient manly and free eloquence, fell, through an affectation of novelty, into a number trifling and puerile refinements in ſtyle: analogies, inſtead of being fetched from nature, were borrowed from language itſelf; and verbal conceits and turns were admired for true wit and juſt ſentiment. Afterwards, upon the irruption of the northern barbarians, the language

guage itſelf became mixed and adulterated as well as the taſte of the writers corrupted: univerſal confuſion was introduced, and the old *Roman* tongue intirely loſt.

There are certain limits beyond which the growth of a language cannot extend. Whatever be the improvements in human life, and the human mind; let men's acquaintance with the powers of nature and art be ever ſo extenſive, their ideas and thoſe combinations and relations of them which it will be at all convenient to expreſs by words cannot be infinite. When, therefore, a people hath words and modifications of words ſufficient for the occaſions they have for the uſe of them, for the language to grow ſtill more copious, and to have words and modifications to expreſs more things and relations than they could attend to, were abſurd and burthenſome. Trees, in the moſt proper ſoil

and

and climate, grow but to a certain height; and when arrived to their full ſize, all the redundant juices ſerve only to nouriſh various excreſcences, as funguſſes, moſſes, &c. which deform and waſte them. In like manner, all the pains that we beſtow upon a language, when it is ſufficiently perfect for all the uſes of it, ſerve only to diſfigure it, to leſſen its real value, and incumber it with uſeleſs rules and refinements, which embarraſs the ſpeaker or writer, and are of no advantage to the hearer or reader.

The time in which a language arrives at its perfection, it is natural to conjecture, will be when the people that ſpeak it have occaſion to make the greateſt uſe of it; which will be when their power and influence abroad, and when arts, ſciences and liberty at home are at the greateſt height. As theſe grow leſs conſiderable, the language will naturally

naturally contract itſelf with the occaſions of it, if it be not preſerved by writing.

When a language is complete in all its parts, and the Grammar of it hath received its laſt improvement, the introduction of a few new terms, ſuited to caſual new ideas and occurrences, and adjuſted to the eſtabliſhed rules, doth not deſerve the name of an improvement in the language. We do not call an oak, that is grown to its full ſize, more perfect, for an additional leaf or acorn. Perhaps one intire century favourable to the polite arts may have been ſufficient, in general, to bring any language to its perfection.

Before a language have acquired a ſufficient number of modifications and forms of ſpeech, different forms muſt neceſſarily be adopted by different perſons: but the beſt

forms

forms of ſpeech, the moſt commodious for uſe, and the moſt agreeable to the analogy of the language, will at length eſtabliſh themſelves, and become univerſal, by their ſuperior excellence: and at the time that a language hath begun to be ſpoken and written with uniformity, it may be taken for granted, to be arrived to its maturity and perfection. For till a ſufficient number of forms have become univerſal, different forms will occur to different perſons, and the language will be written with great diſſimilarity. The *Engliſh* language, in particular, cannot be ſaid to have been fixed till about the reign of queen *Ann*. Before that time, every writer adopted what words he thought proper from foreign tongues; only a ſmall part of them have ſince that period been in uſe: but they are now perfectly incorporated with the language, and our moſt licenti-

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ous writers of any reputation are very ſparing in introducing others.

In general, thoſe writings which have contributed to fix a language are deemed *claſſical* in a country, and a ſtudied imitation of them by ſucceeding writers tends ſtill more to promote a perfect uniformity in writing.

The progreſs of a language towards perfection may be conſiderably accelerated by the labours of perſons who give their attention to it; if they ſtudy the analogy of the language, recommend phraſes that are agreeable to it, and detect and expoſe thoſe that are improper. While literary critics keep within theſe bounds, and their opinions are left to recommend themſelves by their own weight, they do a very important ſervice to a language: but when their deciſions have

have the ſanction of any authority, and forms of ſpeech are adopted becauſe recommended by them, and not on account of the reaſons that might be alledged in their favour, ſince all men, and all bodies of men, are fallible, the interpoſition of their authority is in danger of contributing to eſtabliſh phraſes and conſtructions, which the more mature judgment of after ages would ſee reaſon to correct: and though the ſpirit of men will aſſert their liberty, in rejecting what they do not approve, ſuch undue influence may keep a language much longer in an imperfect ſtate than it otherwiſe would have been.

All the real ſervice that any men, or bodies of men, can do to a language, is to analyze it into its parts, to ſhow diſtinctly what are the materials and compoſition of it, and thereby make the whole ſtructure

of it perfectly underſtood. For when, by the judicious diſpoſition of every thing belonging to a language, all its analogies are ſeen at one view, it will preſently appear what is redundant, deficient, or ambiguous, in the words or conſtruction of it.

Before an improvement can be made of any thing its preſent powers muſt be perfectly known. Before we can improve upon *Nature*, by an artificial combination of its powers, the laws of nature muſt be underſtood; and they are only to be underſtood by a careful obſervation of what doth in fact take place in conſequence of them. A digeſt of theſe obſervations makes a ſyſtem of natural philoſophy.

In like manner, to improve upon a language, obſervations muſt be made upon the manner in which words are actually uſed in

it. A methodical enumeration of the rules and laws of its conſtruction is the *Grammar* of it; as a *Dictionary* is that which contains all the words of a language, and an account of all the ſenſes in which they are uſed. If the language be a dead one, the remains only of the writers of it can be made uſe of; if it be a living one, the forms of converſation muſt not be wholly overlooked, In the former caſe, no innovations can be made. Thoſe who wrote in the language while it was a living one will be accounted the ſtandards of it, and even their imperfections muſt be adopted by all who uſe it after them; unleſs (as hath been thought of with reſpect to ſome of the dead languages) mankind ſhould agree to form a more perfect and philoſophical language out of the remains of it: in which caſe, it could no longer be conſidered as a dead, but as a revived and living language.

In modern and living languages, it is abſurd to pretend to ſet up the compoſitions of any perſon or perſons whatſoever as the ſtandard of writing, or their converſation as the invariable rule of ſpeaking. With reſpect to cuſtoms, laws, and every thing that is changeable, the body of a people, who, in this reſpect, cannot but be free, will certainly aſſert their liberty, in making what innovations they judge to be expedient and uſeful. The general prevailing cuſtom, where ever it happen to be, can be the only ſtandard for the time that it prevails. And in a caſe that admits of no authority to controul a man's actions, it is in vain to pretend that any perſon may not attempt to introduce whatever he thinks to be an improvement. Indeed the fear of becoming ridiculous is ſufficient to prevent many very extravagant and abſurd propoſals.

The

The chief thing to be attended to in the improvement of a language is the *analogy* of it. The more conſiſtent are its principles, the more it is of a piece with itſelf, the more commodious it will be for uſe: and it cannot be looked upon as any great or alarming innovation, meerly to diſuſe ſome conſtructions that claſh with others, and to confine ones ſelf to one ſenſe of any ſingle word or phraſe.

That immenſe and valuable performance of Mr. *Johnſon*'s contains an account of almoſt all the ſenſes in which all the words of the Engliſh language are uſed: and it is very poſſible, from little more than the examples he hath given from our beſt writers of the uſe of every word in every ſenſe, to compoſe a grammar of all the varieties of manner in which words are uſed, both as to their inflection and diſpoſition, which, toge-

ther with the dictionary, would be a complete ſyſtem of our language as now uſed.

Merely to drop what, from a view of ſuch a ſyſtem, were apparently uſeleſs and inconvenient, would make the language as perfect as the general nature of it would admit. To introduce into it all that, upon the ſame view, would appear to be wanting to it, might ſeem too great an innovation; to alter its nature, and character, and make another language: and if it were thought neceſſary to form a new language, it were better to begin from the firſt, upon the moſt philoſophical principles, than take for the foundation of it any of the imperfect languages now in uſe.

LECTURE the THIRTEENTH.

OF THE

COMPLEX STRUCTURE

OF THE

GREEK AND LATIN

LANGUAGES.

TO a perſon who conſidereth the plainneſs and ſimplicity of all infant arts, it muſt appear extremely improbable that the *Greek* and *Latin* languages (and the ſame may be ſaid, in ſome degree, of the *Arabick*,

Arabick, and others of which ſome account hath been given) ſhould have been ſo complex in their primitive ſtructure as they appear to be in the Greek and Roman claſſics. With reſpect to the Greek in particular (which may be ſtiled the mother of the Latin tongue) What occaſion, it may be aſked, had a few tribes of wandering *Cimmerians* (a) (for the firſt inhabitants of *Greece* were nothing more) for a language ſo overſtocked with *caſes*, *declenſions*, *genders*, *conjugations*, *tenſes*, *moods*, &c. Theſe are evidently ſuperfluous to human converſe, and can it be ſuppoſed that a people, who had barely

(a) If we ſuppoſe the language we now call *Greek* not to have been that which was ſpoken by the original inhabitants of *Greece* but that the rudiments of it at leaſt were introduced by *Egyptian* or other eaſtern colonies, we only transfer the difficulty, and leave it to be enquired how the language of thoſe new comers grew to be ſo complex.

barely the neceſſaries of life, ſhould abound in the ſuperfluities of language.

It is, moreover, obſervable that languages do not neceſſarily grow more complex in their ſtructure, in conſequence of their improvement in the copia of words, harmony, preciſion, or any other real excellence. The *Engliſh* language in its preſent ſtate is certainly a great improvement upon the ancient *Saxon:* yet ſo far have we been from adopting any new inflections of words; that we have, without any manner of inconvenience, dropped the greater part of thoſe they had.

It may therefore be enquired how a language, having, at firſt, no more than neceſſary inflections (if any inflections may be called neceſſary) ſhould acquire ſo many more than are neceſſary: and why all languages

guages in their progreſs from ſimplicity to refinement ſhould not go through the ſame ſtages; but that ſome, as they become more perfect, ſhould grow more ſimple, while others grow more complex.

In an attempt to ſolve ſo curious a problem, and account for ſo remarkable a fact, it may not be unpleaſing to obſerve, to how ſmall a difference in the firſt principles of languages it might be owing that, in their progreſs, they came to be ſo unlike one another.

To recur to the principles laid down in the fourth lecture: All the neceſſary words of a language are either the names of things, or words contrived to expreſs the relations of theſe to one another; which are called auxiliary words. Two languages may conſiſt of the ſame words, that is, the people that uſe

uſe them may call every thing by the ſame name, but have a quite different manner of expreſſing their relations; or, on the contrary, their manner of uſing words may be the ſame, but the words themſelves be totally different. In this latter caſe, the ſtructure or genius of the languages is ſaid to be the ſame, and the Grammar of them muſt be preciſely the ſame: whereas, in the former caſe, though the ſame words or names of things were uſed, the different manner of uſing them would make the grammar rules of the two languages quite different. The one might be extremely ſimple, and the other complex: a very few inſtructions might explain every thing relating to one of the languages, excluſive of what was contained in the dictionary of it; but to have the dictionary of the other by heart might not be to have half learned it.

The

The methods of expreſſing the relations of words to words are principally two: the one is by the inflection of them, that is ſome change in the form of them; and the other by auxiliary words, appropriated to the ſeveral relations: ſometimes alſo recourſe is had to bare poſition.

It is not the uſe of one or the other of the two former methods, in themſelves conſidered, that neceſſarily renders the ſtructure of one language more complex than that of another. There is ſomething new to be attended to in both: and what is the difference whether that be a new termination or the junction of a new word with it? The ſame change of termination and the ſame auxiliary word, were they made uſe of invariably to expreſs the ſame relation, would be learned with the ſame eaſe, for example, what greater difficulty would it be to remember

ber that that the relation we intend by the genitive caſe of the word *Carthago*, *Carthage*, were made by *Carthaginis* as in Latin; or *of Carthage*, as in Engliſh: or can it be ſaid that the change of *amo* to *amaveram*, or of *love* to *had loved* is either of them a greater burden to the memory than the other? In like manner were all the words of the moſt extenſively inflected language inflected with perfect regularity, it would not, in reality, be more complex in conſequence of it.

The advantage of a language which makes uſe of auxiliary words above another which hath recourſe to inflection, in point of ſimplicity, is owing to this; that auxiliary words are of univerſal application, and do very rarely either affect, or are affected by, the caſual form of the word they are annexed to; Whereas it was never found that the

ſame inflections would equally ſuit all words of the ſame kind. And ſince, in giving names to things, no regard could be paid to uniformity of termination, words that muſt be uſed in the ſame relations muſt be inflected differently, to expreſs them; according to the difference in the original form of the word: and this being prodigiouſly various, it hath occaſioned, in ſome languages, ſuch variety of inflections as makes the grammar of them extremely intricate.

As to the poſition of words in different languages, though in fact it be ſeldom quite arbitrary; it is (except in a few caſes) a thing that is regulated rather by an attention to harmony, or conformity to cuſtom, than a matter of abſolute neceſſity.

Now conſidering that no people would make their language complex by deſign (for

(for it cannot be ſuppoſed but that thoſe peculiar advantages of the Greek and Roman tongues which they derive from their being complex, were accidental, with reſpect to them, and not perceived till long after the languages were formed) we muſt have recourſe in part to accident, and in part to neceſſity to account for it.

Let us now ſuppoſe that the people who firſt ſpoke the principal Northern tongues had their organs ſo formed, or that it ſo happened by accident, that they did not give the air a free paſſage out of their mouths, but made great uſe of their tongues and lips in retarding and modulating it: which would produce a great proportion of conſonants in their words; and that the people who firſt ſpoke the Greek language were led by oppoſite cauſes to introduce a greater proportion of vowels into their primitive

words. This ſingle circumſtance would make it eaſy to change or add to the terminations of Greek words: for the words generally ending either in a vowel, or a ſingle conſonant, any addition might be made to them, without a ſenſible hiatus, or interruption of the breath; which could not but often be the conſequence of attempting to make an addition to the terminations of words in the Northern tongues.

Let us likewiſe conſider that, ſince no people would invent new words without neceſſity, it would be the moſt natural for all people to begin to expreſs variations in the uſe of words, by alterations in the words themſelves; and that the nature of auxiliary words is founded on more abſtract and metaphyſical ideas; as the attempt to define them will ſhow. The method of inflection therefore was firſt made uſe of by all nations,

ons, as the moſt natural; and the Greek language would eaſily admit the continuance of it to a very great degree. Whereas thoſe people who uſed the northern tongues were not able to go much further in it than a few of the moſt common and familiar affections of words: for the reſt they were obliged to make uſe of auxiliary words. But that the method of inflection is the moſt natural appears to be further evident from this fact, that the moſt common words of all languages, and the moſt common relations of words are the firſt in which inflections take place, and the laſt in which they are exterminated; as in the ſecond and third perſons ſingular of verbs, the three perſonal pronouns, the plural numbers of nouns, &c.

But it ſeldom happens that that which is firſt in order of time and nature, is likewiſe firſt in real excellence and perfection.

Picture-writing was, undoubtedly, more natural than alphabetical, and antecedent to it; but, notwithſtanding, far inferior. And had the Greeks been aware of the extenſive uſe and convenience of auxiliary words, they would certainly not have made ſo great uſe of inflections. But happening in the firſt rudiments of their language to have no occaſion for words correſponding to our *ſhall, will, may, muſt, have,* &c. having no words to expreſs what we mean by *to, for,* &c. and, whether through an affectation of brevity, or inattention, not repeating the perſonal pronouns with verbs, they were under an abſolute neceſſity of inflecting their words according to what Grammarians call the *caſes* of nouns, and the *tenſes, moods,* and *perſons* of verbs; and, to have made their language perfect upon that plan, they ought to have proceeded much further in inflections than they actually did: even till

the

the Grammar of the language had been as complex as the Chineſe method of writing.

The particulars above mentioned for the radical difference between the ſtructure of a language like the Greek, and a language like ours: and from theſe it is eaſy to ſee how all the other particulars in which they differed from us followed of courſe.

As the Greeks could not but pay ſome attention to the analogy of the forms of their words, and perceive that all their nouns and verbs did not terminate alike, and had every other difference that the names of things and actions affixed at random could not but have; they would find it aukward, and even impoſſible, to inflect them alike: hence aroſe the arbitrary diſtinction of *declenſions* of nouns, and *conjugations* of verbs,

verbs, depending on the caſual form of the words.

For the ſame reaſon that nouns ſubſtantive were inflected, though not with the ſame neceſſity, adjectives becauſe they are ſometimes uſed without their ſubſtantives were inflected too, and, that they might correſpond to one another, it was moſt convenient to inflect them in a ſimilar manner.

Nature having evidently made a diſtinction of ſex in many things to which men gave names, and the names of the different ſexes differing generally, for obvious reaſons, in termination only: as *equus, equa: leo, leæna (a)* they began, agreeable to the ſame analogy,

(a) I make uſe of illuſtrations from the *Latin* tongue, becauſe they will be the moſt generally underſtood.

analogy, to vary the termination of the correſpondent adjectives according to it, and to ſay *bonus equus*, *bona equa*. Thus they became poſſeſſed of a *maſculine* and *feminine gender*, both in ſubſtantives and adjectives.

Purſuing the ſame analogy, they made a *neuter* gender, at firſt, moſt probably, for thoſe things, in which it would have been abſurd to imagine any diſtinction of ſex; as *mare* the ſea, *cælum* heaven, *ſaxum* a ſtone, &c. and had they purſued this analogy ſtrictly, and claſſed every thing elſe that had no ſex among the neuters, the diſtinction, though unneceſſary, would have been natural and conſiſtent: But dropping the analogy of nature, a mere fancied analogy to a ſex, or an analogy of the terminations of words to thoſe of others, which, on account of their ſex, were before made maſculine or feminine, determined them to rank

rank others among the maſculines and feminines, which a ſtrict adherence to nature would have excluded from either claſs.

Thus, for example, the ſun having a ſtronger, and the moon a weaker influence over the world, and there being but two celeſtial bodies ſo remarkable, all nations, I believe, that uſe genders have aſcribed to the ſun the gender of the male, and to the moon that of the female. To illuſtrate the analogy of termination, it having happened that the names of many ~~males~~ males ended in *us*, for inſtance, and of their correſponding females in *a*, many other nouns ending in *us*, as *murus*, were, by the analogy of termination, made maſculine, and inflected like them; and, for the ſame reaſon, many other nouns ending in *a*, as *aqua*, became feminines.

There

There being two diſtinct reaſons for affixing the genders of words, ſo different as of ſignification and termination, it could not but happen that, in ſuch a prodigious variety of names, and terminations of words given at random, they muſt ſometimes interfere; the ſignification ſometimes occaſioning a difference of gender in the ſame termination; and, at other times, the termination occaſioning a difference of gender when the ſignification was the ſame.

LECTURE

LECTURE the FOURTEENTH.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

ANOTHER ſource of different inflections, particularly in the tenſes of verbs, was probably accident, and neither neceſſity nor analogy, viz. the ſame radical word happening to be inflected differently by different perſons, and different tribes of a nation at the ſame time. Theſe modifications (though ſuggeſted by the ſame neceſſity of expreſſing the ſame new relations

and

and circumſtances, and therefore having the ſame ſignification) becoming generally known, and uſed at firſt promiſcuouſly, would neceſſarily, in time, be uſed, in different ſenſes, as far as the nature of the thing would admit.

This may be illuſtrated by a very late and parallel inſtance in our own tongue. Not long ago the words *be* and *am* were uſed preciſely in the ſame ſenſe, and promiſcuouſly: but now all accurate writers apply them in a different manner, uſing *am* in a poſitive aſſertion, as *I am*; and *be* where there is any uncertainty in the event; as, *if I be*. Though very frequently in converſation, and particularly in ſome counties, we ſtill hear theſe words confounded.

In this manner might the Greek *perfects*, *futures*, and *aoriſts*, and many of the tenſes

of the *middle voice* have been invented, at firſt by different tribes of the numerous unconnected ſtates of Greece, then have ſpread, and for ſome time have been uſed promiſcuouſly; and laſtly with as much difference as the nature of things would admit of. Indeed at laſt the varieties of inflection exhauſted the diſtinctions of nature. *(a)*

It requires no words to explain in what manner the *Syntax* of the Greek and Latin languages became ſo complex, it being the immediate and neceſſary conſequence of a multiplicity of inflections.

This

(a) In theſe obſervations I have had the *Greek* language chiefly in view. The *Latin* inflections are little more than an imperfect imitation of the Greek, and the manner of their derivation from the Greek is ſimilar to the derivation of the modern Greek from it, and that of ſome modern European tongues from the Latin.

This multiplicity of inflections could only be formed while the language was in its infancy, before it was fixed, and while, upon the plan they ſet out with, there was a neceſſity of inventing new modifications of words. For it is perhaps impoſſible to aſſign a ſingle inſtance of any language gaining new inflections after it became fixed, and reduced to any kind of ſtandard, though never ſo imperfectly, by writing; or, perhaps, after it was ſpoken with tolerable uniformity by the people who uſed it.

The *Greeks* added nothing to the ſtructure of their language after the times of *Homer;* to whom likewiſe it probably deſcended unaltered from their earlieſt poets. The *Romans,* after they became acquainted with the Grecian language, and arts, (which was a means of perfecting their own) added not a ſingle mood or tenſe in imitati-

on of the Greek; though the ſimilarity of the two languages would have made it very practicable. The remains of the *Latin* tongue ſpoken in *Italy*, *France*, and *Spain*, have not borrowed a ſingle inflection from the original Latin, ſince its revival in the weſt, when thoſe languages were very imperfect, and men of learning generally made uſe of the Latin in preference to them. Laſtly, the *Engliſh*, as was obſerved before, inſtead of enlarging and perfecting the caſes and declenſions of their *Saxon* mother tongue, hath almoſt dropped them all.

There is, therefore, no reaſon in the world to believe that any language will ever acquire more inflections, and grow more complex, through the choice of thoſe who uſe it. It is with languages as with all cuſtoms and habits; when they are fixed they are not eaſily changed. Who would chuſe

to

to introduce new words, or new modifications of words, when they found no new purpoſes which the old ones might not be made to anſwer?

It is even obſervable that the moſt poliſhed nations have ever been the moſt backward to admit any alteration in whatever relates to language, eſpecially in whatever comes near the foundation of it. Were not the *Athenians* the laſt to admit the new letters introduced after the time of *Cadmus*? Are not the learned men of every modern European nation convinced that both the Alphabets and Grammars of their reſpective languages might be greatly improved, and yet what ſucceſs have the attempts of ingenious men to make innovations met with?

The advantages and diſadvantages of inflections and auxiliary words in languages

may be illuſtrated by the uſe of *arbitrary characters* repreſenting ideas, as the Chineſe, alſo ſome that are uſed in books of ſhort hand, and an *alphabet of letters*, which repreſent ſounds. To a certain degree, arbitrary characters, by being ſhorter, may be more convenient than characters repreſenting words; as particularly in the nine digits: but, continued beyond that degree, (as they are in a great meaſure independent, and unconnected) they become more burdenſome to the memory than the uſe of a regular alphabet; which, though perhaps more tedious in writing ſingle words, is eaſily varied, and is as intelligible in the new as in old combinations.

In like manner, a few inflections, (one particularly to diſtinguiſh the plural number from the ſingular) may prevent tedious periphraſes; but if we regard the circumſtan-

ces

ces of mankind, we ſhould not multiply theſe conciſe forms of ſpeech till the rules of a language bear too great a proportion to the abilities and leiſure of the people who are to uſe it.

Auxiliary words bring the rules, or Grammar, of a language into a ſmall compaſs; whereby they are the more eaſily obſerved, and give a language a fairer chance of being perpetuated. It ſeems to be naturally impoſſible that the Greek and Roman tongues ſhould have been ſpoken, in their full extent and purity, except by ſcholars and philoſophers: to the common people a great number of their inflections muſt, of neceſſity, have been uſeleſs or ambiguous: Whereas the ſimplicity of the *Engliſh* makes it eaſy to be ſpoken in its purity by all who uſe it, and have been inſtructed in the few rules of it, and bids fair for preſerving

ing it unchanged to the lateſt ages. This will appear more diſtinctly when we conſider the cauſes and manner of the corruption of an inflected language.

Having endeavoured to ſhow in what manner ſuch complex languages, as the Greek and Latin, are originally formed, and given a general idea of the convenience or inconvenience of them; I ſhall, in laſt place, conſider in what manner they gradually break, and particularly in what manner the ancient *Greek* ſunk into the *modern*, and the ancient *Latin* into *Italian*, *French*, and *Spaniſh*.

I muſt premiſe that, in theſe ſpeculations, a good deal muſt be left to conjecture, ſince it is not very eaſy to trace the changes of a cultivated language in its progreſs to a ſtate of barbariſm; though it be extremely eaſy

to

to trace a barbarous langnage to a ſtate of perfection. The reaſon is that all authors are ambitious of writing according to the pureſt ſtandard of the language they make uſe of. In the introductions to almoſt all our Engliſh dictionaries, we ſee every ſtage of the changes of the *Saxon* tongue, down to the modern *Engliſh;* but in *Latin,* we have nothing intermediate between what (in the view in which we now conſider the language) may be called *claſſical,* and the modern *Italian, French,* and *Spaniſh;* nor between the ancient *Greek* and that which is now ſpoken in *Turkey in Europe.* The The variations muſt have amounted to a new language before they would, knowingly, be adopted by writers in general.

No perſons but thoſe who underſtood the old language would be qualified to be writers; and, before the art of printing, very few

few books were written for the uſe of the common people. Sometime after the revival of letters in Europe, men of learning wrote chiefly for the peruſal of men of learning. It is only in the accidental preſervation of vulgar ſayings, ſuch as *acclamations*, *ſongs*, *proverbs*, &c. few of which remain in Greek and Latin, that the intermediate ſtate of a language, between its perfection and imperfect reſtauration appears.

Every complex language muſt neceſſarily grow leſs ſo when the people who uſe it want leiſure to learn and attend to all the minute diſtinctions of it, and they find they can be underſtood by methods which are eaſier and more ſimple. Thus we may take it for granted that, in the confuſion of the Greek and Roman affairs, as the people, in their manners, cuſtoms, &c. relapſed by degrees into their former barbarity; the ele-

gancies,

gancies, refinements, and ſuperfluities of their language were difuſed, and they were content with making themſelves underſtood by the help of fewer inflections than remain in their beſt writers.

But the preſent *Italian*, *French* and *Spaniſh* tongues, moſt probably, took their riſe from the imperfect attempts of barbarous nations to ſpeak the Roman tongue, and particularly in the provinces; and that long before the diſſolution of the Roman empire by the irruption of the northern nations.

If we conſider the Grammar of thoſe languages with attention and compare them with the Latin, we may almoſt ſee the very manner in which they were produced. Foreign nations, in attempting to ſpeak Latin, could not avoid imitating the princi-

pal

pal tenſes of their verbs: accordingly we can plainly diſcern the form of them in their preſent languages. When people who had not the advantage of a regular and perfect inſtruction endeavoured to ſpeak in Latin, they would naturally think of nothing but of rendering the words of their own tongue literally into it; and when nations of the *Teutonic* original had rendered into ſome ſort of Latin, or retained, their own articles, caſual prepoſitions, and auxiliary words (which, being fundamental in their own language, would be the laſt things they would part with, and indeed what they could have no idea of their being able to do without) they would find that more inflections were unneceſſary. The Roman ſoldiers, who formed the colonies, being no great maſters of the language, would make no great difficulty of leaning to this barbarous manner of ſpeaking it. It

confirms

confirms this conjecture, that the preſent *Italian*, *French*, and *Spaniſh* tongues were originally called *Roman*, in oppoſition to the native languages of thoſe who ſpoke them.

Greece being continually open to the inroads of the *Italians*, *Germans*, *French*, and other northern *Europeans*; particularly about the time of the *Croiſades*, the *Greek* language admitted a good deal of the idiom of the northern tongues in the ſame manner: though, from the forementioned internal cauſes, it had loſt a great number of its inflections before; as was moſt obſervable about the time of the emperor *Juſtinian*, and this change had begun ſo early as the tranſlation of the ſeat of the empire from *Rome* to *Conſtantinople*.

In the *modern Greek*, we ſee almoſt a

literal tranſlation of ſome of the Teutonic auxiliary verbs into Greek, in for had, and for will; which of courſe ſupplanted a great part of their former va riety of tenſes; for the modern Greeks ſay

I had written,

thou hadſt written, &c.

I will write,

Thou wilt write, &c. and to ſupply the place of moods, they have evidently tran ſlated their own forms of expreſſing the modes of affirmation into Greek particles which they have prefixed to the commo inflections.

LECTURE the FIFTEENTH.

OF THE

REVOLUTIONS

OF

LANGUAGES

AND OF

TRANSLATION.

LANGUAGES would never be loſt, were the People that ſpeak them ſuffered to continue perfectly unmixed with other nations: but they are liable to become

corrupt and extinct by the influence of other languages, in various ways and degrees.

A language may be wholly loſt in a very ſhort time, if the people that ſpeak it be ſubdued and carried captive by a nation that ſpeaks a different language, and eſpecially if the captives be intermixed with the conquerors. Thus the *Jews* are ſaid to have loſt their language at the time of the *Babyloniſh captivity:* for after that time pure *Hebrew* remained only in the ſacred books, and the modern *Jews*, who have no liberal education, ſpeak no other language than that of the country they are born in.

A people having a dependance upon, and intercourſe with, another people, more conſiderable than themſelves, are in danger of exchanging their language, in time, for that of their powerful and more learned neighbours

bours. Thus the *Engliſh* ſeems to gain ground upon the *Welch*, and it may be ſuppoſed the *French* upon the *Britannoiſe*.

Neighbouring independent nations, ſpeaking different languages, but having an intercourſe with one another, cannot avoid borrowing words from one another: and the language of the contiguous boundaries muſt be a mixture of both.

One nation making an irruption into the country of another, and remaining with the inhabitants will, in ſome degree, introduce their language with themſelves.

If the conquered nations be entirely deſtroyed, baniſhed, or inſlaved, their language will be wholly loſt in the country. In conſequence of one intire conqueſt, the ancient *Britiſh* language gave place to that

of their *Saxon* conquerors in England, a
became confined to *Wales*.

If the conquerors be numerous, and i
timately mixed with the old inhabitants, t
ancient language may undergo a very con
derable alteration, not only in the change
its words, but in the very genius and conſ
tution of it. Thus the people of *Italy*,
conſequence of the frequent irruptions
the northern barbarians, have entire
changed their language, for another of
quite different genius and conſtitution, wi
different laws of the modifications of word
and a different ſyntax.

The *French* and *Spaniſh*, but particula
ly the latter, have had the very frame
their language conſiderably altered by th
long reſidence of the *Romans* among them
whereas *Britain*, being a later, and mo
diſta

diſtant province of the empire, though it received almoſt as many Latin words as any neighbouring nation, did not change the frame of its language in the leaſt. The *Welch* have many *Latin* words though not ſo many as the *Engliſh* (who received a great part of theirs through the medium of the *Norman French*) but neither of the languages have Latin terminations, Latin declenſions, Latin conjugations, or a Latin ſyntax.

For the conſtitution of a language is as different a thing from the words of it as the conſtitution or form of government, in any country, is different from the inhabitants of it. For as, in the one, the people may all change, and the laws and form of government remain the ſame; ſo a people may change almoſt all their words for others, but make the new ones conform ſtrictly to the

the diſpoſition, and all the modifications of the old. Thus the *Latin* word *animal* is transferred without variation into *Engliſh*; but it hath not carried along with it its caſes, *animalis*, *animali*, &c. and the Engliſh plural is *animals*, not *animalia*.

A poliſhed nation conquered by Barbarians hath generally inſpired their ſavage conquerors with a love for their ſciences; which being to be learned only in the language of the conquered people, it hath, on that account, recommended itſelf to the ſtudy of the conquerors. Thus the *Greek* Language became familiar at *Rome* after the conqueſt of *Greece* by the *Romans*,

When a cultivated language ceaſes to be ſpoken, it may reman in books, and when the introduction of the ſciences into other countries makes thoſe books to be ſought after,

after, and the language, in ſome ſenſe, to revive, the only ſtandard of that language is the practice of thoſe original authors: whatever their practice will warrant, it is allowed, may be imitated: but every word or phraſe that is not found in ſome original author (though ſo far analogous to the genius of the language as to be in no danger of being miſtaken by thoſe who are verſed in it) is by ſome condemned as barbarous, becauſe it is uncertain whether the people who ſpoke the language would have uſed it.

It ſeems, however, very poſſible to carry our ſcrupuloſity too far in this caſe, if we conſider the real uſes of reviving a dead language. *Latin*, though a dead language, is now, for the purpoſe of literature, and the correſpondence of the learned, revived in *Europe;* being not only generally read, but alſo written by all who pretend to a learned

or

or liberal education. Now it ſeems to be ſufficient for our purpoſe if the phraſes and conſtructions we make uſe of be ſuch as cannot be directly proved to be contrary to the practice of the ancients, though it be impoſſible to find the very words, phraſes, or conſtructions in any ancient writer. For though it be poſſible the ancients might laugh at our modern Latin ſtyle, we do not write for their peruſal, and we are in no danger of giving the ſame offence to thoſe for whoſe uſe we do write. Allowed forms of ſpeech have no natural, but only an arbitrary preference to thoſe which are diſallowed. In language every thing is regulated by mere cuſtom, and in things that have no internal excellence, we ſhould conſider only the uſes to which they are applied.

The tranſlation of the ancient *Greek* and *Latin claſſics* into modern lauguages is of prodigious

prodigious ſervice to improve thoſe languages: for the *Moderns*, endeavouring to expreſs the ſentiments of the *Ancients* with exactneſs, will enlarge their own ſtock of words, and fix and aſcertain their meaning with the ſame preciſion. At preſent, with reſpect to the *Greek* and *Latin* claſſics, it is in a manner the teſt of the culture and excellence of modern languages to have good tranſlations of them, and the language of any *Europeans* is reckoned barbarous and unfiniſhed till they have attempted and ſucceeded in ſuch tranſlations.

As the chief difficulty of tranſlation conſiſts in rendering the idioms properly, I ſhall in this place conſider the nature of them.

There are few words, in any language, that are not made uſe of to expreſs more ideas than one; and not only ſuch as are analogous

analogous to one another, as the *foot* of a man, the *foot* of a beaſt, the *foot* of a chair, the *foot* of a mouutain, &c. but ideas that have no ſort of reſemblance natural or artificial: as *bear* to carry a burden, and *bear* a beaſt. Now as languages were formed independant of one another, it cannot be ſuppoſed that any two terms ſhould denote a conſiderable number of the very ſame independant ideas; but that, though it may happen that, in ſeveral ſenſes, the words might be truly rendered the one by the other, the coincidence could hardly be ſo perfect, as that, in every circumſtance and connection, they ſhould convey the very ſame idea. Thus the *Romans* ſaid *cornua tauri*, and we ſay the *horns of a bull;* but though the *Romans* moreover ſaid *cornua exercitus*, we do not therefore ſay the *horns of an army;* but, uſing another metaphor, not at all more natural, but what cuſtom

hath

hath eſtabliſhed, ſay the *wings of an army*. Where, therefore, the coincidence doth not hold, a tranſlator muſt be obliged to have recourſe to different terms in his own language, to expreſs ideas for which the ſame term ſuffices in the language he is tranſlating from.

Further, many of our compound ideas are not natural, but artificial and arbitrary combinations of ſimple ideas; particularly thoſe of meaſures, cuſtoms, terms of art, and thoſe relating to all the abſtract ſciences in general. In theſe caſes, the occaſions and circumſtances of people who ſpoke different languages might be different, and not lead them to form the ſame combinations; ſo that one nation, not having the ſame ideas with the other, but ideas conſiſting of different parts, it is impoſſible they ſhould have terms to expreſs them; as the *talents* of different

nations, the *oſtraciſm* of the *Athenians*, and the *Levirate* among the *Jews*.

A tranſlator from languages which contain ſuch terms as theſe, namely ſuch as repreſent combinations of ideas that were never made in his own country, and for which, therefore, he can find no names in his own language, muſt either treat them as proper names, by adopting the very words which are uſed in the language he is tranſlating from, or form a new word from thoſe in his own language, which come the neareſt to the foreign ideas that he would repreſent: and without the one or the other method it is impoſſible to tranſlate faithfully, or indeed at all.

In all languages, likewiſe, ſuch ſenſes are affixed to combinations of words as could not be gathered from the component parts of

of them; much leſs therefore will they bear to be tranſlated into thoſe words in another language, which generally anſwer to thoſe component parts. Of this kind is the phraſe *il y a, there is* in *French*, the joint meaning of which words could not be gathered from the meaning of them ſeparately taken. How abſurd would it be to render this phraſe in *Engliſh*, by *it hath there*.

In this caſe, intire words reſemble ſingle letters in other words: that is, they have no meaning in themſelves, but the phraſe compoſed out of them is the leaſt ſignificant part into which the ſentence it helps to form can be divided; as, in general, ſingle words are the leaſt ſignificant parts of a ſentence.

Theſe complex kind of idioms are little attended to by thoſe who ſpeak a language;

becauſe, from their infancy, they learn to affix ſingle ideas to thoſe whole ſentences, in the ſame manner as they uſually do to ſingle words: for inſtance how few *Engliſh* people are aware that *to give over a thing* is an idiom of this kind, or a phraſe, of which the ideas of the parts do not compoſe the idea of the whole; yet it requires but little reflection to make them ſenſible of it.

When ſuch idioms as theſe occur in tranſlating from one language to another, a tranſlator muſt do what the people who uſe it conſtantly do; that is, pay no regard to the words ſeparately taken, but, conceiving the idea, expreſs the whole in ſuch terms as, in the language he is tranſlating into, are appropriated to it.

Exact tranſlation is rendered much more difficult by the accidental aſſociation of numberleſs

berleſs foreign circumſtances with the general meaning of words: For inſtance, a word being much uſed by people of low and mean profeſſions, may, from that circumſtance only, be reputed mean and vulgar, and be avoided by perſons of a liberal education; and one word may be objected to, as groſs and diſguſting, and another be made uſe of in preference to it, which conveys the very ſame idea, only in a leſs offenſive manner.

This minute diſtinction in the uſe of words it is almoſt impoſſible to preſerve in tranſlating even from a modern and living language, on account of the improbability there is, that any words, in two languages, ſhould have both the ſame general meaning, and the ſame accidental foreign aſſociations; but it is abſolutely impoſſible in tranſlating from a dead language, in which we have hardly any

means of tracing thoſe accidental aſſociations.

This is a great advantage which the remains of a *dead language* have over writings in a *living tongue.* In the former it is impoſſible to diſtinguiſh what is mean, vulgar, and illiberal; every phraſe which is handed down to us by ancient writers is received as equally good and proper; in a courſe of time thoſe caſual aſſociations are forgotten: whereas time hath not done this kind office to the latter, but many words and phraſes, beſides the principal idea they repreſent, convey to the minds of thoſe who are perfectly acquainted with every circumſtance in the uſe of them, a number of other ideas which have no relation to the principal ones, but which adhere inſeparably to the words, and may make the uſe of them very improper, when, otherwiſe, no objection could have been made to them.

The

The humour of comedy and burleſque writing depends very much upon this minute diſtinction in the uſe of words, as well as upon the changeable manners and cuſtoms of particular places. In conſequence of this circumſtance, the moſt delicate part of the wit of theſe writings is temporary, and local; and therefore impoſſible to be preſerved in a foreign and diſtant tranſlation.

Nothing ſo directly tends to improve a language as the judicious tranſlation of valuable polite writings of other languages into it. For it is eaſy to ſee that the language tranſlated into, by this means, acquires the very ſame power of expreſſion with the language that is tranſlated from. Beſides, the tranſlator, having nothing but his ſtyle to attend to, will probably make it more correct and harmonious than he could have done, if he had

had had both the language and ſentiment to attend to at the ſame time.

Conſidering tranſlations in no other view than as ſerving to improve the language into which they are made, they cannot be too free; that is, provided the whole ſenſe of the author be communicated, and none of his ideas be loſt or changed, it is an advantage that the ſingle words, ſeparately taken, ſhould not ſtrictly correſpond to one another: for, by this means, each language retains its own characteriſtick properties, while their power of expreſſion is the ſame.

LECTURE the SIXTEENTH.

OF

METRICAL COMPOSITION.

THE firſt attempts towards ſpeech muſt have been automatic ſounds, excited by particular circumſtances, and little more than inarticulate expreſſions of fear, grief, joy, ſurprize, &c. *(a)* conſequently

(a) Notwithſtanding the powers of ſpeech might have been communicated, in a conſiderable degree, to the firſt parents of the human

quently men would at firſt ſpeak very loud and ſtrong. Agreeable to this, it is obſervable, that children, in their firſt attempts to ſpeak, exert their whole ſtrength. It is not natural to ſpeak low, till ſpeaking have become not only perfectly voluntary, but even ſecondarily automatic, and aſſociated with very ſlight preceding circumſtances.

From theſe principles it is natural to ſuppoſe that, while language was imperfect, the buſineſs of ſpeech would be a matter of more labour than it is at preſent; and that mankind, in the firſt ages of the world, would, from habit, continue for a conſiderable

race; yet, ſince it is natural to ſuppoſe it would be only ſufficient for the purpoſes of their own condition, we may perhaps conceive more juſtly of the manner in which language was improved, by ſuppoſing mankind to have begun from ſo ſmall a beginning as is repreſented in the lecture.

able time that vehement articulation in which words were firſt learned.

The buſineſs of rude and ſimple ſpeech being a matter of ſo much labour to thoſe who firſt uſed a language, it cannot be ſuppoſed that *metre*, or *verſe* ſhould have been introduced till a conſiderable time after proſe had been in uſe. The latter is a matter of neceſſity, the former of ornament only. For *metrical compoſition* requires that words be placed in ſome regular order; ſo that the pronunciation of them may yield a kind of harmony. This, it is eaſy to ſee, requires ſome choice of words. Language, therefore, muſt not only have been formed, but have become pretty copious before it would admit of verſe.

The firſt verſes (like the rudiments of all other arts) were probably made by chance.

The

harmony of words, at firſt caſually placed in metrical order, would engage the attention. The pleaſing ſenſation accompanying it would excite mankind, when they were firſt at leiſure to attend to their language, to conſider the nature and manner of it; from whence the tranſition to imitation is univerſally natural.

When verſe became tolerably familiar and eaſy, and before the art of writing was invented, it would ſoon be perceived to be an excellent vehicle to convey the knowledge of paſt tranſactions to poſterity; ſince verſes are eaſily committed to memory, and the regularity of the meaſure helps to prevent miſtakes in the repetition. Thus, in time, would moſt nations become ſtocked with traditional poems, ſerving for memorials of remarkable tranſactions; of which thoſe relating to their Gods and Heroes would

would be repeated and ſung in their honour at their feſtivals. For the invention of *Muſick* and *Poetry* hath, in all nations, been nearly cotemporary; and there have always been methods of adapting the one to the other. The ſimple pronunciation of the ancients being ſlow and raiſed, muſt of itſelf have been muſical.

Things being in this ſituation, it is natural to ſuppoſe, that the firſt things men would think of committing to writing (after the art was invented by them, or communicated to them) would be theſe *poems*; and it might be ſome time before they would think of making uſe of the art for any other purpoſe. Accordingly, we find in hiſtory, that, in moſt nations, poems were the firſt compoſitions that were committed to writing, and that, the art of proſe-writing was ſubſe-

quent to it. Sir *Iſaac Newton* (I ſuppoſe upon the authority of *Strabo*) ſays that the *Greeks* wrote nothing in proſe before the conqueſt of *Aſia* by *Cyrus*, about which time *Pherecydes Scyrius*, and *Cadmus Mileſius* introduced writing in proſe.

Any one meaſure of verſe being found out, it was eaſy to diverſify it; and make it yield all the harmony it was capable of.

All the harmony that the *Ancients* ever attempted to give their language aroſe from the proper diſpoſition of the ſyllables according to their *quantity*, as divided into *long* and *ſhort*, two ſhort ſyllables requiring the time of one long one. To exemplify this, take the following verſes of *Virgil*.

Tityre, tu patulæ recubans ſub tegmine fagi
Sylveſtrem tenui muſam meditaris avena.

All

All the harmony of theſe verſes conſiſts in the proper diſpoſition of the long and ſhort ſyllables. And, according to the more elaborate pronunciation of the ancients, the difference in the length of ſyllables would be more obſervable than it is with us. This regard to quantity did not in the leaſt interfere with the raiſing or depreſſing of the voice, which they called *Accent*.

On the contrary, according to our method of pronunciation, it is impoſſible to diſtinguiſh the quantity and accent. We pronounce every ſyllable with equal rapidity, except one ſyllable in every word, which we pronounce with more force than the reſt; which, doth, in ſome meaſure, of neceſſity, occaſion a production of the ſound. It is the regular fall of this accent that conſtitutes the principal part of the harmony of all *European* verſes, as in the following in *Engliſh*.

Say why was man ſo eminently raiſed
Amid the vaſt creation, why ordained
Through life and death to dart his piercing eye,
With thoughts beyond the limits of his frame?

Beſides this, another kind of harmony hath been introduced into moſt modern languages; which is the ſimilarity of ſound at the cloſe of the verſes, called *Rhyme*. The following have this kind of harmony.

Know then this truth (enough for man to know)
Virtue alone is happineſs below.
The only point where human bliſs ſtands ſtill,
And taſtes the good without the fall to ill:
Where only merit conſtant pay receives,
Is bleſt in what it takes and what it gives.

POPE.

The principle therefore, or ſource of harmony, in ancient and modern poetry, is totally different: the former ariſes intirely from quantity, the latter from the accent and ſometimes accent in conjunction with rhyme.

For

For this reaſon the ancient poetry was, of the two, the better adapted to muſick; which is regulated chiefly by time, and perhaps the juſt pronunciation of verſes, according to the natural length of the ſyllables (with a peculiar raiſed tone of voice, and ſuch variations with regard to acute and grave as that manner of ſpeaking would naturally throw the voice into) might be that in which the principal part of ancient vocal muſic conſiſted. Whereas, in modern muſic, (unleſs a long note be contrived to receive the accent through the whole verſe, which is ſeldom done, except in ſome few ſongs) our poetry hath no more than an arbitrary connection with our muſic, and proſe ſuits it quite as well: but to ſing proſe would have been reckoned very abſurd among the *Ancients*, it being a thing that was never thought of or attempted by them.

Our muſic, indeed, may be contrived to correſpond, in general, to the ſentiment and paſſion expreſſed in a poem: for as the verſes may be of a diverting or mournful nature, the muſic may likewiſe, upon the whole, tend to inſpire mirth or melancholy; but the particular words of the poem have ſtill no real connection with the particular ſtrains of the muſic. How often do we ſee, in very good muſical compoſitions, where words are ſubjoined, the moſt expreſſive and important ſtrains in the muſic to fall upon very trifling words in the poem. And do we not generally ſing the ſame notes to every ſtanza of an ode; notwithſtanding that the variation of the ſentiment, and the different diſpoſition of the emphatical words in the line, ſeem to require a proportionable change in the notes that are ſung with it: yet ſo arbitrary and general is the connexion between our muſic

and

and our poetry, that the abſurdity is not perceived.

Modern languages, and *Engliſh* in particular, do not admit of the meaſures of ancient poetry; becauſe the diſtinction of our ſyllables into long and ſhort is not ſufficiently apparent. According to the rules of ancient verſification, too great a number of them would be long. On the other hand, the leaſt tendency to rhyme was condemned as vicious in ancient poetry; till, in ſome late centuries, when the ancient pronunciation of the Latin was forgotten, ſome *monks* compoſed Latin verſes in rhyme, but without any regard to the quantity. One of them is ſaid to have turned the whole *Æneis of Virgil* into rhyme.

As the rules of verſification do neceſſarily confine a writer in the choice of his words,

poets,

poets, in all languages, take liberties which are not allowed to proſe writers. This is called the *licentia poetica*, and makes the language of verſe differ conſiderably from that of proſe. In the *Italian* tongue this is very obſervable: for inſtance, *anima*, in that language, ſignifies *the ſoul*, in proſe; when, in verſe, it is changed into *alma*.

LECTURE the SEVENTEENTH.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

DIFFERENT PROPERTIES

OF

LANGUAGE.

TO avoid, as much as poſſible, all general and vague declamation in the compariſon of different languages, I ſhall, in the firſt place, lay down rules and criterions of the value of languages, and ſubjoin

ſubjoin examples to the obſervations I ſhall make.

An attention to the uſe of language will inform us that, to the perfection of it, there muſt concur the three following particulars. In the firſt place it is neceſſary there be a ſufficient copia of words; ſecondly that there be no ambiguities of words or conſtructions; and, laſtly, that the pronunciation of it be not grating, but pleaſing to the ear. The two former of theſe criterions contribute to clear expreſſion, and are therefore the fundamental properties of a good language; the latter is a matter of ornament only. Before I conſider any language in particular, I ſhall make ſome general remarks upon each of the properties abovementioned, to prepare the mind to form a true judgment.

With

With reſpect to the firſt mentioned particular, a ſufficient copia of words, it may be obſerved, that a language will neceſſarily, by ſome means or other, increaſe in proportion to the number of ideas and combinations of ideas to be expreſſed by it; and that, till, in conſequence of the introduction of arts and ſciences, the ideas of a people be increaſed and diverſified, a copious language would be ſo far from being of uſe, that it would be a great incumbrance to them. Having no new ideas to expreſs by their new words, numbers of them, if they were uſed at all, muſt become ſynonymous. A copious language therefore ought rather to be conſidered as an argument of the improvement of the nation that uſes it than an encomium upon the language itſelf; the latter being only a conſequence of the former.

Again people equally cultivated upon the whole may excel in different reſpects; of courſe the language of one nation will be more copious in ſome things and more defective in others: ſo that, upon the whole, the one may have no advantage over the other.

Moreover, it is poſſible that a language may abound in words, the differences of which may be very ſmall and inſignificant; with reſpect both to the ſound (being effected by a ſlight change of termination, &c.) and the ideas they convey. Such a language may abound in minuteneſſes, and yet not have the real compaſs and extent of a language which hath fewer words but thoſe more materially different. The chief advantage of the former language will be reaped by the *poet*, and the *orator*; as it will ſupply them with a greater choice

choice of words without any materially ſenſible difference in the ideas they convey. The number of words in the *Engliſh* language doth not exceed the number of words in the *Greek*; and yet the arts and ſciences treated of in Engliſh books demonſtrate that, having more knowledge, we have certainly more ideas than they had. *(a)*

Secondly, a language ſhould not be ambiguous. Upon this head it may be remarked that ambiguity may ariſe from two diſtinct cauſes. In the firſt place, the ſame word may be uſed to expreſs more ideas than one; in which caſe the ſenſe can only be determined

(a) It is not however denied that minute differences in the ſignification of words are ſometimes of conſiderable uſe to *Philoſophers*; who, in refining upon vulgar ſentiments and ideas, have occaſion to refine upon the vulgar language too.

mined by its connection with other words; as to *bear a child*, or to *bear a burden* or, as is the practice in ſome nations, by different tones and elevations of the voice, or different geſtures of the body, accompanying the pronunciation of the ſame word. Secondly, ambiguity may ariſe from a want of ſufficient methods to denote the ſeveral relations of words to one another: for the ſenſe of a ſentence depends as much upon the connection of the words, as the meaning of them ſeparately conſidered.

Sometimes the relations of words are expreſſed by other words appropriated to that purpoſe; as (to) in the ſentence, *He gave the book* to *me*. Sometimes the ſituation of a word may ſerve to expreſs its relation to other words in the ſentence, as *Alexander conquered Darius*, or the relation may be

be expreſſed by the termination, as *Darium vicit Alexander.*

Theſe are all the methods to prevent ambiguity, ariſing from a defective connection of words; upon which I would obſerve, that, in all theſe caſes, provided the fundamental rules of a language be obſerved, ambiguity will be equally prevented: for, in whatever manner it be done, the relations will be actually denoted.

All the advantage of a language which hath recourſe to the order and diſpoſition of words to denote their relations is, that it admits of no tranſpoſitions, for the purpoſe of the poet and orator, unleſs in ſentences in which the ſenſe itſelf will be ſufficient to ſhow the relation; as in this, *Theſe things did Jeſus*, or *Jeſus did theſe things.* In whatever order theſe words be placed, though

neither termination nor particle expreſs the relation, no other than Jeſus can be imagined to be the agent; and the things referred to muſt have been done by him. In other caſes, when either term is naturally capable of being the agent or patient, ſuch a ſentence admits of no tranſpoſition.

It muſt, however, be remarked, that, when the difference of relation is expreſſed by the termination, the diſtinction by place is of no uſe; ſo that the means to prevent ambiguity is but ſingle in one caſe as well as in the other. For when the ſubject and attribute, for inſtance, have not been confined to one place more than another, the place cannot be conſidered as diſtinguiſhing them.

But the advantage of a language that expreſſes the relation of words by terminations,

above

above another that expreſſes the ſame relations with equal preciſion by particles prefixed, can only be in appearance, and the one will admit of as much tranſpoſition as the other. Becauſe, as the particles accompany the word, in the one caſe as ſtrictly as the terminations in the other, their relations to other words will be known with equal certainty in any tranſpoſition: as *Theſe things did Jeſus in Cana,* or *In Cana Jeſus did theſe things,* or *Theſe things in Cana did Jeſus.* (a)

(a) Had the modern *European* languages any particle to diſtinguiſh the accuſative from the nominative they would with much greater preciſion admit equal degrees of tranſpoſition with the *Latin* and *Greek*, as the leſs preciſion of the latter ariſes from hence, that different caſes have the ſame terminations. E. G. in Latin the *dative* and *ablative* plural always, and ſometimes ſingular are the ſame, in firſt declenſion the *nominative*, *vocative*, and *ablative* are alike, in neuters, the

If it be ſaid, that fewer words are employed in one caſe than in the other, it is anſwered, that this makes no real difference, with reſpect even to the pronunciation, and conſequently the harmony, much leſs to perſpicuity: ſince not only thoſe particles, and the words they belong to, but all the words of an intire clauſe of a ſentence perfectly

nominative, *vocative*, and *accuſative*, &c. This inconvenience is moreapparent in adjectives, thus *bona* is the *nominative*, *vocative*, and *ablative*, *feminine*; and *nominative*, *vocative*, and *accuſative plural* neuter: when therefore other words intervene between the ſubſtantive and its adjective the ſenſe will hardly preſent itſelf at the firſt reading, as in

Candida nec nigra cornua fronte geras. *Ovid de triſt.* The Greek writers do likewiſe frequently place the prepoſition after the caſe it governs, and ſometimes at a conſiderable diſtancce from it. See an inſtance Plut. Eth. p. 242.

In ſome of theſe caſes, however, the difference of quantity would make a ſufficient difference between words which were written with the ſame letters, in the pronunciation of the ancients.

fectly coaleſce in pronunciation; there being, in fact, no greater interval between word and word, than between ſyllable and ſyllable: which was the reaſon why languages were written anciently without any diſtinction of words. Suppoſing, therefore, that the ſentences taken together conſiſt of the ſame number of ſyllables, and thoſe ſyllables be capable of an equally eaſy pronunciation, it makes no manner of difference, whether they be divided, mentally, into words and particles, or into words with terminations; ſo that it cannot be the uſe of articles, prepoſitions, and auxiliary verbs, in themſelves conſidered, that makes modern languages at all inferior to the ancient.

Further, with reſpect to preciſion in the uſe of words, it cannot be but that the words of any language, after they have been uſed

a conſiderable time, will acquire ſome determinate meaning: and in how many different ſenſes ſoever a word may happen to be uſed, at the firſt introduction of it, it is impoſſible but that ſome one acceptation, at leaſt in the ſame conſtruction, or ſome few analogous ſenſes will prevail at laſt, and all other ſignifications will grow into diſuſe. So that it is in vain for any writer to pretend that, in any language, which hath acquired a ſufficient copia of words, for the occaſions of thoſe who uſe it, he cannot expreſs himſelf with accuracy and preciſion, upon ſuch ſubjects as the people who uſe it are accuſtomed to. No perſon can be at a loſs in this reſpect but for want of being acquainted with the language he would uſe.

With reſpect to modern *Eurepean* languages in general, and the *Engliſh* and *French* in particular; they have been ſo long

long uſed, without any conſiderable alteration (which they would daily have received, till they had arrived to a ſufficient degree of preciſion, and ſuch perfection as things of this nature admit of) they abound with ſo many books upon all ſubjects of human ſpeculation, or human practice; that a perſon who is maſter of all the powers of any of them will be at no loſs to expreſs in it all the conceptions and ideas he can wiſh to communicate, with the utmoſt certainty of being perfectly underſtood by thoſe who uſe the ſame language.

The laſt mentioned criterion of a good language is the eaſe with which it is pronounced: for, certainly, a language is not very eligible which requires a very violent exertion of the organs of ſpeech, or is incapable of poetical or oratorial harmony. Upon this head I would obſerve, that the number

number of conſonants compared with that of the vowels, in the ordinary combinations of them, in a language, is no certain criterion of the harſhneſs or ſmoothneſs of it: for it is very eaſy, by a proper poſition of them, to make a word which hath a greater number of conſonants in it be pronounced with more eaſe, and ſound more agreeably than one that hath fewer. How many conſonants are there to one vowel in the Engliſh word *ſtrand*, and yet where is the harſhneſs of that word? If we attend to the articulation, we ſhall perceive, that the poſitions of the tongue appropriated to thoſe conſonants are contiguous, and do not interfere with one another: though it be certain that the poſition and motion of the organs of ſpeech may be ſo complex, in pronouncing different conſonants together, as conſiderably to impede the pronunciation; and therefore make it more difficult to be pronounced though it

may

may not ſound very harſh when pronounced. In this and the following caſes let the impartial ear be judge.

Secondly, a long ſyllable is not of itſelf more diſagreeable to the ear than a ſhort one: for inſtance, what is there more harſh in the pronunciation of the words *ſtand*, or *blind*, than *to* or *for*. Beſides, a language that hath not many complex *monoſyllables* muſt have more *polyſyllabic words* to correſpond to them: for the ſimple monoſyllabic combinations of letters are very few. So that the difference of time in ſpeaking different languages is never worth regarding: for inſtance *ſtrength*, or *fortitude*. But the rapid pronunciation, of every language, particularly in common diſcourſe, (which naturally ſoftens every harſh colliſion of the conſonants) renders almoſt all differences of this kind wholly inconſiderable. This is very

very remarkable in the *French* pronunciation which is not much more conciſe than that of neighbouring languages, when ſpoken full and deliberately.

Thirdly, imagination and deception have much to do in the buſineſs of pronunciation; ſince we find that articulations which appear harſh to one do not appear harſh to another. For inſtance, with how little reaſon do neighbouring nations complain of the difficulty of pronouncing the Engliſh *th* as in the words *that, then, thread.* The reaſon is that ſuch a particular poſition of the organs of ſpeech as the pronunciation of it requires is unuſual to them, and therefore they muſt take ſome pains to learn it.

Perhaps none but a native can be a competent judge of the harmony of his own language, and to him the articulations of it can

can hardly ever appear harſh, whatever they be abſtractedly conſidered: from being familiar, they are eaſy.

The *Hebrew*, *Arabic*, and other *Eaſtern* tongues are thought very ſweet and melodious in the countries where they are, or have been, ſpoken; and yet they abound with *Gutterals*, and *Aſpirates*, which, in their own nature, are the moſt difficult and violent articulations that the human voice is capable of. In the *Greek* frequent uſe is made of (anſwering to in *Hebrew*) alſo of and (none of which were pronounced by the ancients as we now pronounce them) and yet all people think the *Greek* to have been a very harmonious muſical language.

Fourthly, we muſt not judge concerning the harmony of a language from the uſe

that is actually made of it by any one writer, but a number of the beſt, who had the moſt command of it: for we ſee, in our own tongue, that the difference between two writers, in point of harmony of ſtyle, is often almoſt as great as between two different languages.

Fifthly, The real ſtructure of a compleatly harmonious language muſt be ſuch as will admit of any words or number of words to ſucceed one another with eaſe, as if they were one word. Too many conſonants therefore muſt not be thrown either to the beginnings or the endings of words: otherwiſe, though the words, ſingly taken, may not ſound diſagreeably; yet, when combined with others like themſelves, the concourſe of ſuch a prodigious number of conſonants at the end of one word and the beginning of the next may not only impede

the

the pronunciation, and interrupt the ſound, but embarras the organs of ſpeech, and make the articulation harſh and diſagreeable.

Having premiſed theſe general obſervations and criterions, we may with the greater eaſe, clearneſs, and certainty, characterize the ſeveral languages that gentlemen of a liberal education have occaſion to make themſelves acquainted with, or make uſe of.

LECTURE

LECTURE the EIGHTEENTH.

A COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGES.

THE *Hebrews* were a people who, till their language was fixed, were, in a manner, ſtrangers to the arts and ſciences; they lived generally under an abſolute monarchy, and, in their whole hiſtory there occurs not one period in which eloquence, or the art of ſpeaking in public, is taken notice

notice of. Though, therefore, we know not the whole extent of their language; nothing but the *ſacred books* being come down to us, we may naturally conjecture, it could not have been a very copious one.

With reſpect to its ſtructure, it is remarkably ſimple and regular, conſidering the number of its inflexions. It is, however, in ſome things ſuperfluous, and in others defective; but theſe apprehended ſuperfluities and defects are not peculiar to it, but common to it and moſt other Eaſtern languages; and, being ſo general in that part of the world, it is poſſible that they may be no inconvenience, but rather peculiarly ſuited to the manners and occaſions of the people that uſe them.

The moſt remarkable ſuperfluity is the *genders of verbs*, and of the *perſonal pro-*

nouns; and its moſt remarkable defect ſeems to be, that it is in a manner wholly incapable of *compounding* its words; though it excells all others in the exactneſs and regularity of the ſimple derivation of the greater part of its words from a few roots. It ſeems alſo very extraordinary that a language which deſcends even to genders in its inflexion of verbs ſhould have no caſes for nouns, and that its preter and future tenſes ſhould be uſed promiſcuouſly by the uſe of the ו *converſivum.*

The *Hebrew* having no caſes for nouns, admits of few tranſpoſitions: and, on that account, cannot be well adapted to the purpoſes of verſe: yet, on the other hand, ſince both nouns and verbs admit of a great variety of prefixes and ſuffixes, the words ſeem calculated to intermix with one another without any diſagreeable hiatus, or ſenſible embaraſſment in the pronunciation; a thing

thing greatly favourable to verſification. It may likewiſe be ſubjoined in this place, that the poetical parts of the *Old Teſtament* excell the poetry of all other nations in ſublime conceptions and ſtriking metaphors, which are the life and ſoul of true poetry. The *meaſure of verſe* in this language is wholly unknown.

This language hath a ſingular advantage in the ſtructure of its verbs, ſince by means of its *Pihil*, *Hiphil*, and *Hithpahel* ſeveral very important modes of an affirmation may be expreſſed with wonderful conciſeneſs and energy.

Hebrew is probably one of the moſt ancient languages in the world: for we can diſcover no traces of its derivation from any other language whatever. Similar it is to other Eaſtern tongues, but which of them was

was the *mother-tongue*, it is impoſſible, for want of ſufficient data in ancient hiſtory, to determine. It is in every reſpect a dead language, being neither ſpoken by any people on earth, nor read but for the ſake of underſtanding the books of the Old Teſtament, which are written in it.

GREECE was the mother of ſcience and of arts to this weſtern part of the world: conſequently, the language of Greece is the fountain from which all our terms in thoſe arts and ſciences which were known in Greece are derived. It continued to be ſpoken for the ſpace of many centuries, each of which abounded with *Orators*, *Poets*, *Hiſtorians*, and *Philoſophers*; whoſe conſtant ſtudy it was to uſe it to the moſt advantage. It was alſo ſpoken a great part of this time by many independant and rival ſtates.

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The natural conſequence of theſe circumſtances was a redundancy of words, and conſtructions, and prodigious dialectick differences in the pronunciation and uſe of words.

It ſeems ſurprizing that, notwithſtanding this manifeſt redundancy of Greek words, many hundreds of them are no otherwiſe to be diſtinguiſhed from one another than by their accent (the characters of which were unknown to the ancients) as , *vita*; and , *arcus*. And in one intire ſet of compound words, the accent alone determines whether they are to be underſtood in an active or a paſſive ſenſe. Thus is *matricida*, one who kills his mother, and is *a matre occiſus*, one who is killed by his mother.

There is, likewiſe, a great redundancy of

of Greek *tenſes:* at leaſt it is impoſſible for us to conceive how time paſt, for the uſe of ſpeech, could be divided into eight diſtinct parts: for ſo many preterite tenſes of an active ſignification (including thoſe of the middle voice) the Greek verbs have. And indeed, to judge from the actual practice of Greek writers, we cannot perceive but they uſed many of them promiſcuouſly.

There is too great a latitude in the ſyntax of the language: ſo that it requires ſome time before a perſon can get acquainted with the particular manner of conſtruction uſed by a new author, ſo as to read him with eaſe or almoſt with underſtanding. And in the moſt celebrated and valuable authors, ſo much is crowded into a ſentence, the clauſes are ſo diſlocated, and the conſtruction ſo perplexed (a mark of exceſſive refinement in writing, as was obſerved before of the

the concatenation of ſentences) that few who learn Greek are ever able to maſter them thoroughly. This is the caſe particularly with *Thucydides*, and *Demoſthenes*.

In conſequence of the prodigious variety of words in this language, and the remarkable eaſe with which they run into all poſſible combinations, it admits of the utmoſt preciſion, and the moſt minute diſtinctions in our conceptions may be expreſſed in it. This however renders tranſlation from Greek peculiarly difficult, for want of terms in other languages to expreſs ſo many degrees and ſhades, as it were, of ideas.

On account of the happy mixture of vowels and conſonants, the unequalled copia of words, their eaſy concurrence, and unparallelled tranſpoſition, in *Greek*, no poet, orator, or writer in general, could have a language

language more to his wiſh, when once he was perfectly maſter of it: but the extent and intricacy of it (notwithſtanding there be many pretenders to the knowledge of it) will keep the riches and powers of it unknown, except to a few in modern times.

Greek is a dead language, and hardly any attempt to write in it at this day; and indeed one language is ſurely ſufficient for the correſpondence of the learned: but there are a prodigious number of books extant in it, of unſpeakable value for the cultivation of the human mind, and containing the greateſt maſterpieces of *Poetry*, *Oratory*, *Hiſtory*, and moral *Philoſophy*.

The language ſeems to be original, both with reſpect to its words and conſtruction, as we are not acquainted with any older language ſimilar to it. The words that it is

ſaid

ſaid to have borrowed from the Eaſtern tongues are very few.

The Greeks were taught the uſe of letters by *Cadmus*, who is ſaid to have been a *Phenician*. But as he left *Aſia* about the time of *David*'s conqueſt of *Idumea* (which was probably the nation that firſt of all diſtinguiſhed itſelf for its application to the arts and ſciences) and many of the inhabitants, being obliged to abandon their country, took ſhipping at *Tyre* and *Sidon* in order to ſeek their fortunes in the weſt, it is not improbable that he might have been an *Edomite*.

The LATIN tongue doth, in many reſpects, bear evident marks of a Greek original, the Latin *declenſions*, *inflections of verbs*, and *ſyntax*, which are the ſtamina of a language, are analogous to the Greek as far as they go. The Roman letters, and

a great number of their oldeſt words, ſuch as pronouns, &c. (which, from the nature of the thing, muſt have been coeval with the firſt riſe of the language) are likewiſe Greek. The founders of *Rome*, having been ſeparated from the Greeks before the letters invented by *Simonides* were generally received, the Latin alphabet varies in ſome reſpects from the Greek. The Roman colonies were alſo planted before the ſtructure of the Greek language was ſo complex as it afterwards grew to be, became intermixed and incorporated with ſeveral nations of *Italy*, and roaming *Celtes*, and continued many hundred years in a ſtate next to perfect barbarity, without paying the leaſt attention to their language. On theſe accounts, the internal ſtructure of the language is much leſs complex than the Greek, and leans more to the ſimplicity of the northern tongues.

The

The Latin tongue continued very rough and barren till the introduction of the Grecian arts and ſciences into Rome, from their acquaintance with which the Romans derived all the copia and harmony of their own language. All *technical* Latin terms relating to the ſciences and the more elegant arts are intirely *Greek*, and many *Greek* words, which the *Roman* writers had occaſion to make uſe of, (that either could not well be expreſſed by *Roman* letters, or which, by reaſon of their termination, or on any other account, did not incorporate very eaſily with their own tongue) it was cuſtomary for them to intermix, pure Greek as they were, in their own Latin compoſitions; and probably in their diſcourſes too. This practice began about *Cicero*'s time, in whoſe works many ſpecimens of it may be ſeen, and eſpecially in his epiſtles.

The *Latin* falls greatly ſhort of the *Greek* with reſpect to the facility of the compoſition of words, notwithſtanding it retains a conſiderable power of diverſifying their ſignification by the uſe of prepoſitions, &c. and it hath a ſufficient number of *diminutives*. From the *Northern Languages*, it derives a greater proportion of conſonants than the *Greek;* but is ſtill ſufficiently harmonious for the purpoſe of verſification.

The *Romans*, having one ſeat of power and of arts, allowed of no dialects; which makes their language the more uniform and regular, and the more eaſy to be learned. It hath very little of that ambiguity and intricacy in its ſtructure that is complained of in the Greek, and being nearer to the medium between the extremes of ſimplicity and refinement, ſeems of the two to be much

better

better adapted to the general uſe of mankind.

Had the Romans continued a longer time unmixed with barbarous nations, and arts and ſciences flouriſhed ſome centuries longer at Rome, the Latin tongue could not have failed to acquire a copia of words equal, in uſe and value, if not in number, to that of the Greek; at the ſame time that it would have improved itſelf in point of regularity, and analogy with it ſelf; which the ſtate of Greece would never have admitted in their language: on the contrary, the Greek language neceſſarily grew continually more various and unlike itſelf. But, through an unfortunate turn of events, it happened that the Roman language was ſpoken in its purity little longer than one intire century; after which it became greatly corrupted, and was abſolutely

ſolutely a dead language, long before the Greek.

Upon the revival of learning in the weſt, the *Latin* became the only language of the *Literati* in *Europe*, who hardly made uſe of any other either in converſation or in writing. Since the cultivation of the modern tongues, it hath not been ſo much uſed; but ſtill it is highly diſreputable, in a perſon of a ſcholaſtic profeſſion, not to be able to expreſs himſelf correctly in it upon occaſion.

The *Roman claſſics* are not perhaps, upon the whole, inferior to the *Greek*; but the really valuable Latin authors are much fewer than the Greek: and, without underſtanding Greek, it is in vain to pretend to a thorough knowledge of Latin. The ruins of the Latin tongue have greatly enriched all the

the modern European languages, and do ſtill contribute to their improvement.

The modern *French*, *Italian*, and *Spaniſh* tongues have fewer inflections of words than the *Latin*; but more than the *German*, and *Engliſh*. For though, originally, the ſame *Celtick* language was ſpoken in all thoſe countries; yet, in conſequence of the greater proximity of *Spain* and *Gaul* to Rome, and the more intimate and longer intercourſe of the nations, the languages of thoſe countries have deviated conſiderably from their original principles; whereas the *Engliſh* has only borrowed *Latin* words to incorporate with its own, and the *German* hath, even in that reſpect, borrowed little from the *Latin*.

The *German* language ſeems to be but little removed from its ancient barbarity.

The

The *French* and *Italian* have attained to their *ne plus ultra;* and the *Engliſh* ſeems to be as near to its meridian as poſſible.

The *French* ſyntax hath been made more intricate than formerly by a greater multiplicity of rules than uſe required, and the peculiarity of its accent and pronunciation hath an unfavourable effect upon its poetry; as it makes it incapable of that variety which is neceſſary to true harmony, at the ſame time that, in common with all other European languages, it makes no uſe of the quantity of ſyllables in verſe.

The ſplendour of the *French monarchy*, at a time when language had begun to be attended to in Europe, and it became in a manner neceſſary to uſe ſome one language in the forms of public tranſactions, contributed to recommend the *French* as the *poli-*

tical

tical language of *Europe*: it likewiſe introduced it into the *European courts*; and it is alſo now become in a great meaſure the common language of *merchants*.

The *Italian*, of all the modern tongues, is the beſt adapted to muſic: for the ſtructure of the language is ſuch as gives the freeſt play to the vowels, there ſeldom occurring ſuch a concourſe of conſonants in it as can ſtraiten or confine the paſſage of the ſound.

It doth not ſeem poſſible that any of the modern languages (according to the ſtate of improvement in the arts and ſciences) ſhould want words. Whenever the want of new terms was perceived by a people, had they nothing to have recourſe to but the common ſtock that nature hath lodged in the variety of articulation that the human voice is capable

ble of, they would ſoon ſupply themſelves: how much more eaſy then is it to introduce words already appropriated to the very ideas they want to expreſs, either from the dead languages, or ſome of the living neighbouring ones. Accordingly we find that we are ſtill borrowing words occaſionally from other tongues, and the neceſſity or convenience of this practice will ſoon eſtabliſh ſuch words, notwithſtanding all the clamour that may be made againſt innovations.

LECTURE the NINETEENTH.

OF THE

ORIGIN, USE,

AND

CESSATION

OF

DIVERSITY

OF

LANGUAGES.

THE race of mankind having, according to the Old Teſtament hiſtory, had one origin, muſt have ſpoken one language, and this would continue to be ſpoken

ken without much variation while their numbers would permit them to reſide near together.

The preſent diverſity of languages is generally believed to have taken its riſe from the building of *Babel*, and to have been brought about by the interpoſition of the divine being: But it is no impiety to ſuppoſe, that this (agreeable to moſt other operations of the deity) might have been brought about by natural means. The poſſibility of this natural deviation ſeems to be deduced from the following conſiderations.

Firſt, The primitive language, or that which was ſpoken by the firſt family of the human race, muſt have been very ſcanty, and inſufficient for the purpoſes of their deſcendants, in their growing acquaintance with the world.

Secondly,

Secondly, Not being fixed by the practice of writing, it would be very liable to variation.

Thirdly, Suppoſing the primitive language to have had few inflections (becauſe few would have been ſufficient) it would eaſily admit any inflections which chance or deſign might ſuggeſt to the firſt founders of different families, or to their ſucceſſors. Theſe different inflections would conſequently introduce different conſtructions of words, and different rules of ſyntax: and thus what are called the very *ſtamina* of languages would be formed independantly of one another, and admit of all poſſible varieties.

Fourthly, Conſidering into what different climates mankind were diſperſed, furniſhed with the bare rudiments of the art of ſpeech,

into what different ways of living they fell, and how long they continued without the art of writing (without which no language can be fixed) it ſeems to be no wonder that languages ſhould be ſo different as they are; both with reſpect to the rules of inflection, with the fundamentals of Grammar which depend upon them, and the words of which they conſiſt.

The difficulty which ſome alledge there is in conceiving how languages ſhould ariſe in the world ſo very different, not only in the words, but in the manner of uſing them, ſeems to ariſe wholly from the ſuppoſition, that the primitive language was copious, regular, and perfect in all its parts: the difficulty of changing ſuch a language is allowed; but the fact, it is apprehended, is much eaſier accounted for upon the preſent hypotheſis,

To theſe arguments it may be added that, to a perſon thoroughly acquainted with the preſent ſtate of mankind, the prodigious diverſity of human manners and cuſtoms may probably appear almoſt as difficult to be accounted for as the diverſity of languages only.

Different languages being formed, in this manner, long uſe, and much more writing, would, at length, fix them; but leave them ſtill ſubject to the changes and revolutions that have been mentioned, and accounted for, in a preceding lecture.

This diverſity of languages is generally complained of as a great inconvenience to the human race, in that it prevents ſo free a communication as there otherwiſe would be among men. This may be allowed, and yet, upon the whole, this diverſity of lan-

guages may have been of great advantage to us; both as individuals and a collective body.

In the first place, diversity of language and diversity of government (the one in great measure contributing to the other) tended to check the propagation of vice and false religion in the early ages of the world. This would help to prevent the establishment of any one species of idolatry in the world, which might have taken place in consequence of one common language, and one empire, or much larger empires, and of longer duration than any that have actually subsisted. Whereas, divided as the state of the world hath been, no superior degree of credit was given to any species of false religion more than to another; by which means, their mutual absurdities have been more easily exposed, and true religion hath had a fairer opportunity of establishing itself.

Secondly

Secondly, The Study of different languages hath a moſt happy influence upon the human mind, in freeing it from many prejudices and errors, which ariſe from verbal aſſociations and analogies. We ſee that perſons who have no knowledge of more than one language are perpetually confounding the ideas of words with the ideas of things; which the compariſon of languages, and frequent rendering from one into another, helps to make us diſtinguiſh.

We ſee, in particular, with what difficulty and uncertainty perſons who have learned only their native tongue diſtinguiſh the parts of ſpeech, for want of attending to the different kinds of ideas which they repreſent. Let the experiment be tried upon a perſon of good underſtanding, and it will be found a conſiderable time, and in conſequence of very cloſe thinking, that he

can learn to diſtinguiſh the moſt obviouſly diſtinct parts, as *ſubſtantives*, *adjectives*, and *verbs*: and perhaps he will diſtinguiſh them, at laſt, rather by their circumſtances, and adjuncts, than by an attention to the nature of the ideas they preſent to his mind. For inſtance, he will diſtinguiſh an *adjective*, by its admitting *man* or *thing* after it; a *ſubſtantive* by its taking *good* or *bad* before it, and a *verb* by its being preceded by the perſonal pronouns *I*, *thou*, *he*, &c. and not by conſidering that a *ſubſtantive* is a name of a thing; an *adjective*, a property; and a *verb*, an affirmation. And, as in this, ſo, for the ſame reaſon, it is eaſy to ſee that, in every other reſpect, the compariſon of different languages muſt be of infinite ſervice to us in helping us to diſentangle and diſtinguiſh our ideas.

How many of the abſurdities of the *Greek philoſo-*

philoſophers, of all ſects, are we now able to trace up to verbal analogies? the *Latin* tongue was too near the *Greek* to be of much ſervice to the Romans in this reſpect. How many of thoſe controverſies in chriſtianity, which aroſe before the propagation of learning in the weſt, are, at the bottom, merely verbal? How many of them were exploded upon the firſt revival of learning and the ſtudy of languages? and how many are ſtill exploded by the ſame means at this day? Theſe facts demonſtrate the unſpeakable advantage of the ſtudy of different languages. To appearance, this is an affair of *words* only; but theſe words are, more cloſely than men imagine, connected with *things*, and things of conſiderable conſequence.

To this, let me add that, it were almoſt impoſſible that the nature and rationale of language ſhould have been underſtood, while

it

it had continued one and invariable. The little light that hath yet been ſtruck out upon the ſubject of language in general hath reſulted from the compariſon of the properties of different languages actually ſubſiſting. For want of the grounds of this univerſal language being thoroughly underſtood, it could hardly have been uſed with preciſion in many particular caſes; let it, originally, have been ever ſo perfect; and mankind, having no general principles of language to have recourſe to, to help them to correct and adjuſt it, as new occurrences aroſe; it is not impoſſible but that the inconveniences of this one univerſal language might ultimately, have exceeded thoſe ariſing from the uſe of different languages.

It may, likewiſe, give ſome additional evidence to a ſpeculative mind in favour of theſe arguments, to conſider how analogous

thoſe

thoſe ſuppoſed benefits ariſing from the diverſity of languages are to the reſt of the works of nature: ſince we have reaſon to believe that all *evils*, whether neceſſary to, or permitted in this world, are both *temporary*, and, while they continue, *ſalutary*; that is, relatively ſo, and the ſtate of every thing connected with them conſidered.

There have been ſome men of learning who flattered themſelves with the proſpect of the intire ceſſation of this diverſity of languages; and ſeveral projects have been ſet on foot to conſtruct one *philoſophical language*, which ſhould be adaquate to all the purpoſes of ſpeech, and be without thoſe ſuperfluities, defects, and ambiguities, either in words or ſtructure, with which all languages actually abound. This language, it is ſuppoſed, would recommend itſelf to the *literati* for the eaſe and preciſion attending the

the uſe of it, and by degrees become the language of the whole world.

The moſt rational plan of an univerſal and philoſophical language is that which Dr. *Wallis* hath delineated in his elaborate treatiſe upon the ſubject, and of which the following is a ſketch.

Having in the firſt place, with prodigious labour and exactneſs, diſtributed all things to which names are given into claſſes, under forty genuſes or general heads (ſome of which however are ſubordinate to others) he aſſigns a ſhort and ſimple character to each of theſe forty genuſes, a definite variation of the character to each difference under the genuſes, and a further variation for each ſpecies, &c. By this means the characters repreſenting all things that have names have the

the ſame analogies with one another that the things themſelves have.

Characters being provided for the names of things, the Grammatical diſtinctions of words, *numbers tenſes, perſons, voices,* &c. are denoted by ſome appendage to the character.

In this manner may we be furniſhed with an univerſal character, which ſhall repreſent ideas directly without the intervention of any ſounds, and which may be equally underſtood by people uſing any language whatever.

To make this character effable, the Doctor appropriates a ſingle ſound to the characters repreſenting each genus and difference, and alſo to each variation and appendage before mentioned: and they are

ſo

ſo contrived, that the ſimple ſounds adapted to all the parts of the moſt complex character may be pronounced with eaſe as one word.

By this means any people, after they had applied this character to repreſent their ideas, might ſoon learn to read it in the ſame manner as any other people; whereby, in converſation as well as in writing, they might make themſelves perfectly underſtood by one another.

The elements of this character and language are ſo few, and the combination of them ſo eaſy, that the doctor ſays he doth not doubt, but that "a perſon of a "good capacity and memory may, in one "months ſpace, attain to a good readineſs "of expreſſing his mind this way, either in "the character or language."

As

As the names of individuals cannot be comprehended in tables of genuſes and their differences, the doctor hath contrived an *alphabet* of all the ſimple articulations of the human voice; to which he hath aſſigned two ſets of characters, to be uſed at pleaſure: the one conſiſts of ſhort and plain ſtrokes, the other is a kind of delineation of the poſition of the organs in forming the articulations.

Whenever this noble project is reſumed, it ſeems to be impoſſible to proceed upon a better plan than this. The principal thing that is wanting to the perfection of it is a more perfect diſtribution of things into claſſes than, perhaps, the preſent ſtate of knowledge can enable us to make.

At preſent likewiſe, language itſelf, as an abſtract ſcience, is not ſufficiently underſtood to ſucceed in ſo grand a ſcheme; and

whether the preſent diverſity of languages will, in any finite time, have anſwered all the ends it is capable of, and the ceſſation of it be deſirable, is what we have not as yet *data* ſufficient to determine with certainty. Otherwiſe, that ſuch a deſign may be effected, in ſome diſtant ages of the world, when the powers of language and of nature ſhall be more perfectly underſtood, doth not ſeem ſo improbable as many of the preſent actual diſcoveries in *philoſophy* muſt have ſeemed to all men, but a century ago.

Perhaps the analogy of nature may give us ſome encouragement to expect ſuch an event. For ſince all other evils and inconveniences have *final cauſes*, which terminate by the means of thoſe very evils, the diverſity of languages, when it hath compleatly anſwered all the preſent uſes of it, may alſo contribute to its own extermination.

REFEREN-

REFERENCES.

THE books to which I would refer the ſtudent, who is deſirous of making himſelf more perfectly acquainted with ſeveral of the ſubjects treated of in this courſe, are thoſe mentioned below.

The ſameneſs of method, unavoidable in ſuch a ſubject, makes references to particular parts of the *general treatiſes* quite ſuperfluous; and the ſubjects of the other treatiſes are mentioned in the liſt itſelf.

From *Roland* I was ſupplied with a great part of thoſe notes which relate to the peculiarities in the ſtructure of ſome of the *Indian* and *American* languages. If the author

author had had the good fortune to meet with more books (which are probably extant) of the ſame kind; viz. which treat of the peculiarities of foreign tongues, he would have had an opportunity of making this treatiſe much more valuable and entertaining. If any perſon, into whoſe hands this performance may accidentally fall, would direct him to ſuch books, he will thankfully acknowledge the favour.

A general and rational grammar, by Meſſieurs de port royal; as alſo their Latin, and Greek grammars.

Harris's Hermes.

Bayley's introduction to Languages.

Robertſon's method of reading Hebrew.

[Introduction.

Hartley on man. Ch. 3d. Section I. of words

words, and the ideas aſſociated with them.

Du Freſne's Gloſſary of the modern Greek. Preface.

Hadrian Reland's miſcellaneous diſſertations, vol. 3d.

Richards's Welch Grammar, & Dictionary.

Wilkins's Eſſay towards a real Character and philoſophical language.

Brerewood on Languages.

Sharpe's two diſſertations on the origin, conſtruction, diviſion, and relation of languages; and the original powers of letters.

Had the author ſeen this laſt ingenious performance in time, he would not have aſſerted as at p. 276, that the words which the Greeks are ſaid to have borrowed from the eaſtern languages were very few.

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